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# MACLEAN'S

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MARCH 23-APRIL 6, 2009



Performer on Friday paid off for Kate Winslet

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will gradually "mushy away" as Aboriginal people require the skills, values and attitudes that are needed to participate in Canadian society. This process of assimilation, which, as the Canada Encountered, has demonstrated that Aboriginal people give up all aspects of their culture. In fact, assimilation, where Aboriginal people will keep those aspects of their culture that aid their survival, and give up those that are impeding their ability to contribute to the wider society.

Furthermore, with respect to the comments about Europeans being more "advanced" than Aboriginal people, it should be stated that this concerns cultural features at the time of contact—for example, learned behaviours, not moral or biological characteristics. What is being argued is that accidental environmental circumstances resulted in industrial societies that were larger, more productive and complex than those that depended upon a hunting and gathering or hunter-gathering mode of production. While Aboriginal people today have absorbed many of these developments, the Aboriginal industry remains a part of the nation of these absolute cultural features that are impeding some Aboriginal people's integration and participation in modern society. Frances Widdowson, Calgary.

AS CHAIR OF Dr. Frances Widdowson's department, I realize that her research and the conclusions drawn from it are certainly challenging, and to some, offensive. However, to demand that her work be subjected to ideological writing before publication is to determine its conformity to vague, postmodern sensibilities, whereas the very integrity and purpose of the academy. That is a scholar's right to challenge orthodoxies critical to academic freedom, as seen in colleagues like USC's Barbara Herrnstein Smith, who appears to think that scholarship must pass some as yet undefined "usefulness" threshold before publication and dissemination. With that, I am eagerly anticipating Dr. Anne's public condemnation of USC's Widdowson and Gender Studies program.

which challenges historical assumptions of patriarchy and gender relations, therefore showing divergence to social individualism, as well as her association of dilapidated technology and stereotypes programs is offensive to those who hold a traditional view of the universe. Bruce Foster, Chair, Department of Policy Studies, Mount Royal College, Calgary.

real leaders who have suffered the indignity of the previous concept is meaningless in the residential school system, reduced loss of land, food and water supplies on all reserves; self-sufficiency programs (the current plan) in Europe. Let us hope that Canadians from all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds will leave their homes where a belongs,

on location. Debates  
W. E. Green,  
Burlington, Ont.

#### **HOUSING HOPE?**

AS CANADA'S leading real estate organization, I believe that we at Re/Max have a frontline understanding of current market conditions. Which is why I read "The shocking truth about the value of your home" (Business, March 2) with great concern. The cover line, "The value of your home is about to drop another 30 per cent" is not only misleading, we believe it is wrong. Housing values nationally have been climbing steadily since about 2001. Canadian housing values dropped, year over year, for the first time since 1999 in 2008, and the percentage drop was less than one per cent, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA). Maclean's writes, "For over a decade, the real estate industry has pumped out glowing reports... predicting a roaring blue sky ahead." Yet our programs have always always suggested moderate growth. With the exception of 2008, Re/Max has correctly identified the direction of national housing values since 2001.

The article also holds up the Termet National Bank House Price Index as a more reliable source of housing data than CREA, yet it fails to mention that the Termet index only looks at house prices within the four largest markets in Canada—Vancouver, Calgary,

CANADIAN housing values dropped by less than a per cent







## A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Talk about a comeback. On Sunday, archaeologists from the Museum of London revealed they had unearthed the remains of a theatre in Shoreditch that they believe was Shakespeare's first stage. Built in 1576, it is thought to be the site of the premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as some of the Bard's own performances. Then, on Monday, officials from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust unveiled a newly stylized portrait of them painted in 1610, or six years before he died.

### Good news

#### Getting real

The Canadian Auto Workers made a new move this week in accepting a broad package of concessions in hopes of keeping General Motors from sinking into financial oblivion. GM in the United States may yet go into bankruptcy, causing workers on both sides of the border their jobs. But this compromise lets the table for whatever runs from GM's ashes, and throws in sharp contrast to Ford Canada's gradualist suggestion that the government simply subsidize more consumer car purchases with a \$3,500 trade-in incentive. The Ford proposal is a red pill for more of the overcapacity that has brought the Big Three car makers to their knees. If the auto industry is realistic itself, it will need a grasp on reality first.

#### Northern exposure

Move over, Ben Stiller. Cani-stopped U.S. networks are buying up Canadian-produced dramas like they're going out of style. CBS picked up CTV producers Flaherty and The Roadie, both of them police shows, while NBC has grabbed *The L-Word*, a procedural following the exploits of a lesbian paramedic. Critics south of the border say the networks are trading quality for low production costs. We don't think the shows are so bad, but even if they were, it would only be fair. Hollywood has been inflicting an schlock on us for four decades.

#### Very soft power

It took a while—okay, most of a lifetime—but the British government has found meaningful work for Prince Charles. Prime Minister Gordon Brown used to be deploring the prince as a special secretary to promote global action

on climate change. Charles, of course, has great contacts among world leaders and is both passionate and well-informed on the topic. He's been pushing a very persuasive line, for example, about how the world has "100 months to save" before the climate crisis causes irreversible damage. At a time when some world leaders—including the president of the Catholic Republic—are denying climate change exists, a little royal intervention is more than welcome.

### Bad news

#### A losing battle

Signs of progress are always hard to spot in Afghanistan, but this was an especially deflating week. Four more Canadian soldiers were killed, our top army officer admitted the forces' fleet of armoured vehicles is in a state of "catastrophe," and a senior NATO commander admitted his troops are "not winning" the war. Meanwhile, after talking voters for three years his government would never negotiate with the Taliban. Prime Minister Stephen Harper

is a coward through the province's labour movement. Protesters had Jojo Lynn Dupuis quitting \$100 bottled wine, and linked him with a known member of the Hells Angels. Dupuis left his job last November. But considering the above accusations have absorbed our brains and private eye, this could, as our labour leader put it, "mean the union movement is its entirety."

#### Tangled Web

No sooner had opposition politicians in Australia stamped out an Internet censorship bill than would-be Big Brother got busy elsewhere. Glenn's media car called for a "renewal" to monitor the Web, while the government of Bangladesh announced it is blocking YouTube, after someone posted a recording of a sperry meeting between senior army officers and the country's prime minister. The latter now-sentenced particularly lame. The meeting, which followed a bloody mutiny by border guards in Dhaka, revealed little more than we already knew: the soldiers are angry. Air-brushing YouTube is going to change that.

#### Punch drunk

Barely two months have passed since Don Bradman, a 21-year-old amateur hockey player, attacked his head on the ice during a fight and died. Bartha was as much as well as recent history. Still, executives police the Florida this week to discuss possible rule changes, yet opt for half measures rather than debating whether Bartha's should be eliminated from the game. "Highly intelligent," said Brian Bartha of the Toronto Maple Leafs. "And it's going to stay." At least until the next tragedy. ■

### FACE OF THE WEEK



QUATSIMALA: A man suspected of killing a bus driver is detained by police. 36 drivers have been murdered by gangs so far this year.

#### You don't look a day over 20, doll

Happy returns to a pair of venerable institutions. Barbie turns 30 this week, while the Commonwealth hits 60. These two events take plenty of criticism. Some say they're relics whose time has passed. Yet their popularity endures, and so back with the cynicism. Whether you're a South African housewife looking for a friendly neighbor, or a father trying to make his little girl smile, there's a lot to be said for sticking with what works.

new admits—as does U.S. President Barack Obama—that total victory is impossible and appealing to the enemy is a reasonable solution. They may be right. But after so much sacrifice, that's a hard word to swallow.

#### Union winner

Barbers aren't the only ones under a microscope these days. Revolution that the former director general of Quebec's powerful FTQ construction union spent \$125,000 over a two-month period on posh meals have sent

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# He can't swim nude: too many layers to take off



"Ladies and gentlemen," Stephen Harper told an audience in Kingston on Tuesday, "in time I believe I'm reminded of a quote by ancient Roman orifices."

By "times like these," of course, the Prime Minister meant "times when my wife gives me a handy Roman buffet spot for the big speech."

Most people who found themselves queuing in front of the Prime Minister's office on Tuesday were queuing to see the Prime Minister's "fellow officials" but apparently that was a bit gloomy for Harper's purposes. So here's what the Prime Minister's people dug up instead. Buffett "once said, 'It is only when the tide goes out that you know who was swimming naked.'" Harper said, "The global economic crisis has revealed quite frankly that Canada is not one of them."

And indeed it is so. Stephen Harper has not been swimming naked. If anything, he has been swimming in—in the very opposite of nakedness. He has been swimming in ample, modern, call-length bathing trunks. And a three-piece suit. And a speech. Wrapped in a telephone.

I am speaking metaphorically, of course, and so was he. When he meant today was that this country is entering the most difficult period in its history in a position of significant competitive strength. Or so he put it. "This country is entering the most difficult period in its history in a position of significant competitive strength."

His evidence? "The strongest banking system in the world." "The best fiscal position in the G7." The latter refers not only to "the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio and a long-term structural balance in the budgets of most governments" but also to "strength in off-balance sheet items such as a robust public pension plan."

This is all true, and the Prime Minister is right to emphasize these strengths. He did

indeed inherit a sturdy, modest banking system. His government has not changed Canadian banking in any way since he was elected in 2006. He did inherit a low debt-to-GDP ratio. As his finance minister, Jim Flaherty, pointed out in last autumn's economic statement, it's been the lowest in the G7 since 2004. And it's true that Canada's public pension record is strong because governments a decade ago agreed to limit contributions. Jason Kenney, who today sits in Harper's cabinet, complained about that decision for years.

But let's let bygones be bygones. Thanks to Canada's significant competitive strength, if you've just lost your job you're only 65 per cent as unemployed as you would be if you were Japanese. You might say, "Paul, that's a



## Harper's political discourse sounds more like a Capt. Kirk-style logical paradox

misleading assertion," and you'd be right. My only defence is that I've been listening to the Prime Minister.

"Now some in the opposition are even suggesting that the government should provide notes or even approval for each individual spending period." He said near the end of his speech. "That is not realistic—your And country not realistic today's world." Boy, you let it not realistic! It's also not true. That's not what the opposition is suggesting. In fact we're heading toward a handy multi-partisan consensus, because Harper has identified opposition demands which (a) aren't realistic and (b) don't exist.

"We've got the estimates before Parliament," he said. "We all need to keep the pressure on the opposition to act." Small problem: the government hasn't tabled enabling legislation, and won't until March 16.

"So, ladies and gentlemen, and then a message: 'My political guests,' he actually said near. History will record this on the morning the Prime Minister abandoned political discourse altogether for the sort of logical paradox Capt. Kirk used to make computers explode on Star Trek. He said he doesn't like games but he wants the estimates passed. He has tabled the enabling legislation but he wants the parties stopped. He doesn't want to pass the estimates."

The good news for Canadians is that the Prime Minister's statements these days are sometimes true. You can't just beat against everything he says. That said, the Prime Minister's statements are also paradoxical, like his length and 10.11 minutes. So when he says the country may come out of a recession before other countries do, that may be true, even though it won't be true when he said, last autumn, that if Canada was going to have a recession it already would have.

If Canada does weather this recession reasonably well, that will be good news for most Canadians, but bad news for those Canadians who say that Michael Ignatieff. Five months after he was re-elected, Harper once again in fact will be the leader of the opposition. A Strategic Council poll the day before Harper's big speech showed that four points ahead of the Ignatieff Liberals. Opposition parties normally do well against incumbents in tough times, but apparently the times aren't tough enough to allow the Liberals to get off the mat.

Why? Because the Liberals are having a pretty good year. Three months ago the entire Liberal caucus signed a letter endorsing a coalition with the NDP. Now they wish we

would stop mentioning it. This is the patented Liberal Caucus Multiple Choice issue, in which any answer can be correct or not, depending on the timing.

- Canadian government: (a) Excellent idea, (b) Really not.  
Paul Martin: (a) Juggernaut; (b) Never mind.  
Stephen Harper: (a) Could be worse, (b) Wrong again.

All of which explains why Stephen Harper is heading into the most difficult period in his history in a position of significant competitive strength. The crisis has revealed some slowness happens, but Stephen Harper is not one of them. And that's something for which every Canadian can be grateful. ■

ON THE WEB: For more Paul Wells' visit his blog at [www.mcclellan.ca/paulwells](http://www.mcclellan.ca/paulwells)

# Bipartisan he's not, and that's a good thing



ANDREW  
POTTER

It took Barack Obama just two days after he was sworn in as president to toss overboard the "bipartisan" make-believe that had been one of the dominant themes of his campaign rhetoric.

On Jan. 22, he invited key congressional leaders from both parties to the White House to discuss his ideas for an economic stimulus plan. One of the goals of the meeting was to promote bipartisanship, but after listening to Republican gobs about some of his proposed measures, Obama quipped them by saying, quite simply, "I won't."

The stimulus bill was subsequently passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, with the vote in both chambers breaking down almost perfectly along party lines. It's been straight downball since then on the hands-across-Congress front, with the impromptu postmeeting cocktail party ending up to the point where last week Bush Linsbaugh called bipartisanship "a false promise" and said that any good Republican should actually be begging for Obama's plan to fail.

So much for Obama's vow of "an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogma that for far too long have strangled our politics."

Bipartisanship is one of those political keywords, like its lessening cousins "consensus," "nonpartisanship" and "reasonableness," to which everyone flocks they have to pay lip service, and being against it is like being against motherhood or chocolate cake. Except that when people invoke its virtues they often fudge just what it is they are getting at.

Certainly a "bipartisan" political culture that makes a point of coddling to one's political opponents as well as one's own people who have the nation's best interests at heart is not what I had in mind. Along with this goes a willingness to take good ideas, no matter where they come from, a genuinely pragmatic habit of mind that every political

leader would do well to cultivate.

Bipartisanship is also an occasionally necessary tactic. In a democracy, every leader will at times find it necessary to bring at least some members of the opposition on board.

But in each of these cases, negotiation and compromise is a means to an end, a political maneuver useful when it helps bring about a desired policy outcome. As Obama himself replied to the parade of journalists demanding to know why his bipartisan agenda was not so quickly, by the bottom line what it comes to the recovery package is "does it create more jobs"—a goal about which there can be no compromise.

An Arlene Huffington put it recently, the



**No cult of consensus here: Obama knows the flip side of 'I won't' is 'hold me accountable'**

"Washington definition" of conservative bipartisanship, though, boils down to this: going to the other party, splicing any differences you have, putting each other on the back about how nice and civil you are, and moving on. This kind of politics is dangerous, and not in the way its supporters would like.

More often than not, bipartisanship leads to bad policy. Splitting the difference between two distinct courses of action won't give you a golden mean or happy middle path—it will set you on the road to ruin. Is the best way to deal with the current economic downturn massive deficit spending, or massive tax cuts? Sensible people disagree, but one thing is certain: is that a half measure of each a guarantee to make the situation worse.

When the funds for consensus fail to be counterproductive, promoting a political culture that is more partisan and polished.

If your political opponent knows you are committed to a bipartisan splitting of the difference between his position and yours, the sensible strategy is for him to tack in the our way his ideological home wagon is possible. This was the explicit Republican strategy during the 1990s, when the party wanted to every Democratic initiative by making out a position as far to the right as they could. This moved the political "center" ever further to the right, toward which the integrating Bill Clinton dutifully followed.

But probably the worst lesson on effect of bipartisan politics is that it erodes democratic accountability. Elections are about deciding who shall govern, and governing is largely about choosing between competing interests, policies, and directions. Partnership is an essential element of democratic politics, and while many find it distasteful, it is an excellent mechanism for appointing praise when things go well, and blame where they don't.

Thankfully, Obama clearly sees that the flip side of "holding the difference" is "holding the blame," while the flip side of "I won't" is "hold me accountable." Just this week he signed an order—in the teeth of strong Republican opposition—opening the way for more collaborative work with minority leaders. And while the House minority leader John Boehner railed against Obama for

"further dividing our nation at a time when we need greater unity," the President shows no sign of backsliding and trying to carry favour with Republicans just for the sake of appearance.

Obama swept to power by attaching a gritty face and some genuine words to two of the old clichés in politics—change, and unity—which also happen to be rather incompatible ideas. To the extent that change is desirable, it will only be belated by strength at cross party outreach. The first that Obama knew which idea to jettison as quickly as possible is a commitment to his second political agenda, and regardless of how the stimulus package turns out, a sign of hope for the future of democracy in America. ■

**ON THE WEB:** For more Andrew Potter, visit his blog at [www.muckleshoot.com/andrewpotter](http://www.muckleshoot.com/andrewpotter)

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# 'Hurricane Katrina was the turning point for me. They knew a disaster was going to strike. They still couldn't help anyone.'

**BESTSELLING AUTHOR NEIL STRAUSS TALKS TO JULIA KINNELL ABOUT FEAR, SURVIVAL, AND LESSONS IN CHARACTER BUILDING**

Neil Strauss is a former music critic for the New York Times and bestselling author of the new book *Truth Be Told: What I Learned From Surviving Hurricane Katrina*. Strauss describes how he grew up believing that America was the greatest country on earth and he lost faith in the Bush government and began to fear another terrorist attack. He set out to learn how to shoot a gun and build for himself. Along the way, he met some interesting people and a New York Times reporter, who helped him get out of the U.S. Strauss went on to live in a refugee camp in Mexico.

**Q** Your book is, in a strange way, like a self-help book. "How to Survive the Apocalypse." Almost halfway through, you make the statement, "It's a strange how to be an American," and I thought that it's a challenge to the book, right?

A: Yes, that's a great question because that's what the entire book comes out of, people being born in the '50s and '60s, who grew up with a shelter in place in their heads. America was the land of opportunity. All the problems of the world seemed to happen to other people. It seemed like the future was this bright, shiny opportunity where anything was possible. Then, starting with 9/11, all of a sudden everything we thought couldn't happen to us, happened to us. We had an act of war occur on American soil which hadn't happened since Pearl Harbor. We had this con-

stitution, which is kind of a truly awful, which makes us the best, most creative in the world, all of a sudden open to interpretation, and these things could change in the name of national security. Q: And then there was Hurricane Katrina. A: Right. I think that was the real turning point. Katrina wasn't like 9/11. They knew a disaster was going to strike and even then with advance notice they still couldn't help anyone. You never think you're going to see bodies floating in the street, ignored in America. That's when I realized...

Q: Now you go to look after yourself? A: Exactly. Q: You collected some American survivors for a while. Do you remember the first ones in your collection? A: I think it was the person on the flight of the Serbian soldier going on the American flag and saying "Oh, what a feeling." I kept finding these things and it was sort of shocking to see the American flag, for example, destroyed by people.

Q: Did you also take their hate seriously at first. You said that you collected propaganda. Wasn't that the same way a sniper considers his talent makes a collage of dead enemies by black wires and things it on his wall with pride?

A: You can see hate is possible to see America and you're okay with that. You say, well, that's your problem. They're just concerned. But then when you see someone actually behaving for being an American, then you're

like, who, that's serious. Q: I think that's very true. If you see people hate from politics, and look at it as a challenge, probably every one of us has these friends who stay in these horrible relationships because they hope the guy is going to recognize their value and love them and treat them like they deserve to be treated and they cling on to it 100 per cent of hope. I think hope is a emotion that sometimes causes us to cling to things we should really let go of.

Q: That's interesting since you're a president and you have to play to the people. Do you think Americans are too hopeful right now? A: You can't tell the people. That's why I wanted to be a president. I think everyone's very pessimistic now. You're an American paying three times as much as you used to pay, and the house you bought for \$250,000 is now worth \$250,000, and you're still paying the mortgage on it. I think maybe people have hope, but they're hating.

Q: You mention Paul Kennedy's book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Do you really believe the crumbling of the American empire is an inevitable fact? A: Yes, I think if you read Paul Kennedy's book, you find that the writing is on the wall for America. He makes the argument that America is on its last legs as a superpower but that doesn't mean if the great capitals fall, everybody dies and it's the end of Rome.

When Britain tried to be an empire, it didn't last. America was wiped out.

Q: Tell me about your billionaire friend when you call Spencer Koch. How did you meet him?

A: Spencer Koch had read my book called *The Game*, and he wanted to meet me. I'd never been to the Hampton in London. We were just talking about life and politics and all of a sudden he said he was getting a second passport, and not only that, he'd find a large group in his own right, had just gotten citizenship in Australia for tax reasons. I thought I was alone in doing this [getting a second passport] and it was kind of crazy but here these people who are smart and successful, who are doing the smart thing, as a business decision.

Q: So is this a trend among American billionaires? They're all getting second passports so they can flee?

A: I don't know what it is, but so many of those people are just getting dual passports. I spoke to Spencer today, and he said almost all his money is out of American dollars.

Q: What's he afraid of?

A: He believes as the next month some things are going to hit the economy. By the way, when I met these billionaire guys, very conservative thinking, ultra rich businessmen, they all thought that the Canadian passport was the best one to have.

**'I have goats so if something happens I'll have milk and meat. A chicken is coming.'**

Q: Right? You don't mention that in your book.

A: Spencer Koch says that Canada would be the ideal country because if anything happened in the States, you could just walk across the border where it's hard to get to St. Kitts.

Q: I want to ask about some of the things you did to prepare for an emergency. You wrote that everyone can derive happiness from a few animals, that of a large and short it over in the heart. That you can find water in the desert, fly a plane. You also learned to make a water cycle but then you realized it was a waste.

A: I know I thought about that afterwards. The truth is you're much more likely to die in a plane crash or a shooting accident than a terrorist attack or a natural disaster or an economic collapse, and what is a chicken? In the end, the book is about the fear of death. It isn't about being afraid to die, it's about not having control over it.

Q: Do you have any tips for urban dwellers

living a city with emergency?

A: If you're in the city during an emergency, you should have two plans: one to stay at home and one to evacuate if you have to. In the end, you should have a week's worth of some perishable food and water, which is a gallon a day per person. To stay warm, have a horse or heater or a wood-burning fireplace, plus enough food to get you through seven days. As for evacuation, have a plan that includes a safe place to go, a rally point for family members who are elsewhere, and a bag with copies of important documents and a few days of survival supplies plus some cash. Finally, always keep your car in the back of the lot full time. You may not be able to get your car when you need it.

Q: I just talked to a guy who's building a greenhouse so he can grow his own food.

A: Yes, that's a movement of people and I'm doing it as well. If you hear the goats in the background, it's because I have goats.

Q: I thought you had a cow.

A: No, that's the goat. And yes, I have goats so if something happens I have milk and meat. But the truth is, it's kind of hard to milk your goat and not to mention in the city. And a chicken is coming soon, too, for eggs.

Q: How many goats?

A: It was a goat but she was pregnant so now there are three. The funny thing is, I learned how to be an Emergency Medical Technician because she was

you want to learn in medical school to take care of people in an emergency, so I actually got to use my EMT skills to deliver the babies.

Q: I want going to ask you about that goat you killed. You stabbed a goat, almost it I guess it was a cow ever wanted to kill for food.

A: I think there are a lot of things in the book I did that I'm ambivalent about and I think killing an animal was one of the most horrific things I've ever done in my life.

Q: So you wouldn't kill a second goat?

A: Only if I was dying of hunger.

Q: You said you wanted to add something.

A: Yes, I wanted to add that when he was in the book as food and escape actually became incredibly chaotic. Now I'm part of the search and rescue team. I have a paper on my life. It goes off, we go to find a missing child. I never knew how to be a search dog. Knowing how to make a fire and how to identify wild plants, if something ever happens, if the world suddenly ends on a second, at least I'll be a good dad to a small grandchild and I can take my kid camping, which I never could have done before. ■

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# THE CASE FOR OPTIMISM

**Times are tough, but this isn't the Great Depression. And we may be past the worst of it.**

**BY JACOB KERNY** • In 2001, Paul Kestel fired a shot across the bow of American optimism. The soaring housing market had crossed into the danger zone, he warned. Prices were rising far faster than people's ability to pay, and a collapse was all but inevitable. Others had raised their alarm about the crumbling housing bubble too, but Kestel, an economist with the Northern Trust Company in Chicago, was one of the few to fully grasp the threat posed to the economy. Banks were heavily exposed to residential mortgages. A plunge in the price of home would infect the financial system, he predicted, and from there it would spread to the wider economy, scuttling its growth into a deep and punishing recession. As we all know by now, few wanted to hear what he was saying. Officials in Washington clung to the myth, widely held at the time, that U.S. house prices never fell. Paul Kestel scoffed at Kestel's dire predictions. "It was the drunk at the garden party," he says.

Fast forward to today. Everything Paul Kestel envisioned has come true, and then some. House prices are in free fall, the world over. Investor portfolios have been decimated, leaving people miserably feeling poorer. And the U.S. biggest banks have failed or are on the verge of going to the edge of bankruptcy, as in most countries. Plus in Canada we think of ourselves as better off than our sleeker market has plunged, commodity prices have dropped and the housing market is ailing. And every month brings another round of brutal job losses on both sides of



the border. So what does Kestel make of this grim situation? "You actually feeling optimistic?"

That someone with such a track record of spotting serious trouble instead was a sign of hope is reasonable. Every day the news, blogs and newspapers are filled with alarming new claims from economists and financial experts. Time and again, we are told the world is headed for another Great Depression. Some say we're already there. And tell others have taken it down to the main level, predicting global strife in the logical conclusion to the downward. Historian Matt Fergason recently proclaimed, "There will be blood.... It will cause civil wars to breakout, that have been dormant. It will topple governments that were cautious and bring in governments that are extreme." One newspaper columnist went so far as to ask, "Will this recession lead to World War III?"

In the opinion of Kestel and other more level-headed observers, what's really needed now, finally, is for everyone to take a deep breath. This isn't another Great Depression. There was a hell of a lot riding the rails or huge lineups at soup kitchens. In fact, for all the problems facing the economy, some experts are making a cautious case for optimism. There's a growing feeling that the economy could find its footing far sooner than many are expecting, a result of how dramatic the declines have been as well as the response by central banks and governments around the world. This isn't to say the economy is going to immediately pull out of its downward descent, or that the Dow will magically return to the levels it was at before the crash. But it's enough for Kestel to hope to reverse his outlook. "I'm not a rising optimism, but there are things I see that give me some

encouragement," he says.

For Canadians worried about where our economy is headed, that comes down to how quickly the U.S. can recover. Without states ever made this, Canada is deeply invested in America's economy, any upsurge in spending will give a strong boost to what Canada will pull out of its recession.

Paul Kestel's change of heart is one positive sign. So might be the fact that his pessimism about the confidence at the moment. Maybe it's encouraging that, unlike in 2001, everyone is discussing how to spend more. In the same way most forecasts were broadly optimistic three to four years ago, many of this same group now refuse to see anything but terrible times ahead. "We have the preponderance of data in one way or the other, it is psychologically difficult to have a counterweight view," Kestel says. "That's why most economists are useless. The same ones that caused the downturn are probably going to miss the upturn."

I can be hard to be optimistic when you consider what's in the focus and gloom creep. Stephen Jankowski, 85, is one of Canada's most respected economists. As the founder and chairman of Montreal-based fund company Jankowski Fraser Ltd., he announced a fortune estimated at \$1.4 billion by making shared bets on companies when they were out of favor. But when he looks at the situation today, he fears the worst. "The Great Depression is the best comparison to what we're going through now," he says. "Anyone who thinks less is feeling themselves."

Jankowski, unlike so many other market commentators today, actually lived through the financial crisis as a young boy in Holland during the 1930s. "I remember a whole bunch of poor people walking around the streets selling anything they could, like pianos, hoping that somebody would buy out of their charity," he says. But he thinks the economy will get that bad again for individuals. "The way things are going now, we're going to get there in a heartbeat because the government is totally incapable of handling it."

That stuff, indeed. But then again, it's always difficult to know how much to credit a particular prediction. Jankowski himself, though he warned two years ago that the U.S. might face a recession, was still advising investors to invest in American companies as the Federal Reserve and General Electric, calling them "recessionally safe." Those stocks have now tanked, along with the rest of the market. And yet Jankowski is hardly alone. Billions of George Soros, former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker and even President Barack Obama have all warned



**CANADA IS IN A RECESSION, BUT UNEMPLOYMENT IS CLOSE TO THE 33-YEAR LOWS WE SAW IN 2007**

that this crisis has the potential to morph into another depression.

But there is a long history of this kind of declaration. North American financial crises. In almost every major downturn since the Second World War, economists, politicians and investors have sought to convey popular fears by drawing comparisons to the Great Depression. Ronald Reagan, in his first speech as president, warned the U.S. was on the "verge of economic crisis like the Great Depression." At the current downturn, it's not even as severe as some of the deep recessions that have occurred in the past several decades, and from which the economy fully recovered.

It helps to recall just how brutal life was for people living through the 1930s. More than a quarter of all U.S. workers lost their jobs between 1929 and 1932, according to Doug Pomar, deputy chief economist at RBC Capital Markets. This time around, the unemployment rate is down to 7.1 per cent, though by September, it could well rise. In 1932, the Canadian economy was in for better days before the current recession started. In the last two recessions, for instance, the country fared double-digit average rates. In the most

recent downturn and the recession of the 1980s is one of the worst, never mind how fitted the job market was during the Great Depression. In January 1932, 33.6 million workers lost their jobs, sending the unemployment rate to 24.7 per cent. On March 13, Statistics Canada will update its job numbers for February, and it's almost in respect another round of painful job losses. We while Canada is clearly in the throes of a nasty recession, unemployment is still relatively close to the 33-year lows we saw in 2003, when it ran at six per cent. Not even the most dole of economists expect Canada's unemployment rate to reach even the 11.4 per cent mark we hit in 1982, when former prime minister Kim Campbell warned Canadians not to expect a return to single digits any time in the next decade.

Not as economies experiencing anything like the downturns of the 1930s. In the first three full years of the Great Depression, America's economy shrank by an average of 18 per cent. When America's GDP fell by 6 per cent in the last quarter of 2008, it sparked fears a depression era contraction was under way. But the change to a more moderate GDP was expected at annual rates. The annual decline in the fourth quarter was a far more mild 1.6 per cent, and though the economy began to stall in 2008, the economy actually declined only 1.1 per cent over the year before. No one

denies this year will be rough. Even Kestel expects the U.S. economy to shrink by three per cent overall. But that would still make this recession only marginally worse than the one that occurred in 1982, and not even close to the depths of the Dirty Thirties.

In Canada the economy is even to shrivel, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. That's been the message all along the banks of Canada Governor Mark Carney, who has emerged as the country's leading optimist. He originally said to expect a recovery later this year, but has since been forced to push that date back to early 2010. Even so, a quick glance at Canada's economic performance over the past quarter certainly provides some hope we'll emerge from this recession with somewhat fewer scars. From 1981 to 1983 Canada's GDP plunged 4.9 per cent, peaking as tough, with another drop of 3.4 per cent between 1990 and 1991, according to Doug Pomar, deputy chief economist at RBC Capital Markets. This time around, the unemployment rate is down to 7.1 per cent, though by September, it could well rise. In 1932, the Canadian economy was in for better days before the current recession started. In the last two recessions, for instance, the country fared double-digit average rates. In the most

son of the early 1990s there was the added problem that Canada's finances were in shambles. "The government couldn't support the economy because they were borrowing dollars and dealing with huge deficits," says Peterson.

It showed what really sets the downturn apart from the Great Depression, for individuals in need, as the individuals that have been put in place. Roughly 9,000 banks were built during the first few years of the Depression, wiping out the life savings of millions of households. Today's bank deposits are insured and backed by government against losses of up to \$250,000 in the U.S. and \$100,000 in Canada. There is also a social safety net made up of welfare, unemployment insurance and health cover age that was completely absent in the 1930s. There won't be a repeat of Grapes of Wrath stories, with hundreds of thousands of migrant workers forced to watch their children starve. As John Homan, a Maryland-based fund manager who uses the current crisis timing, wrote in a recent market commentary, "To say that this is 'the worst since' exaggerates the Great Depression's like blowing up a cross of effigies on the Nevada Proving Grounds and saying it is the worst explosion since the detonation of the atomic bomb there. Even if the statement is accurate, the comparison is absurd."

So why does all the talk of a depression hold such sway over us? Possibly because we've just come out of one of the longest booms in North American history. The problem is, this has left a large segment of the population unprepared for what usually hard times are really like. Many workers today are too young to even remember the harsh downturn of the early 1980s. "We've forgot ten how to do economics," says Glenn Hodgson, an economist at the Conference Board of Canada. "This is what a recession looks like. Profits are down. Jobs are being lost. People have stopped spending. We've almost become too good at macroeconomic management as when recessions do happen people don't have it as part of their personal reality."

Whatever the reason, while most economists and pundits continue to dwell on comparison with the Great Depression, a small number have turned their gaze to the real economy.

## 'EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT. WE DO HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC MACHINE EVER CREATED,' SAYS BUFFETT.



**2009**  
Buffett is the U.S.'s third-richest man in the world as of February.

most education of his time ahead. Stocks typically began to rebound four to six months before the end of a recession. So far, with major indexes like the Dow Jones Industrial Average down more than 50 per cent from their 2007 peak, unemployment as bad as ever and Bear Stearns argues that could be about to change. Every month the U.S. Conference Board asks consumers to assess both the current conditions in the economy and their future expectations. The difference between what consumers expect in the future and their current assessment is something Visa calls the "expectations gap." And during past recessions, going back to the 1970s, when the future has begun to look drastically better than the present, a stock market rebound and economic recovery have invariably followed behind. "We're at the point when consumers' expectations about the future, even though they're bleak, are better than the expectation despair that is the assessment of the current situation," he says. "The expectations gap has turned up, and the length of time it's turned up is consistent with a bottom occurring in the stock market in the near term."

It's important to note that once if the market were to rally this month, that would still mean a recovery wouldn't occur until the end of the year, or early 2010. But perhaps it's no coincidence that several prominent bear market investors have recently issued bullish forecasts. Last week Hans Landhold told investors not to put their money in his Grizzly Bear Fund, which makes bets that stocks will fall in value. Last year the fund rose 74 per cent, but Landhold has joined other prominent pessimists in suggesting the stock market is close to bouncing out. Despite all the pain caused by the market crash, there's more value than \$1.6 trillion sitting on the sidelines in money-market funds waiting to be invested. You can think of all that cash as money building up behind a dam, ready to flood into the stock market as soon as there is any recovery. It's that money that fuels a rebound in the capital markets, and that's how more money bank up behind that dam than ever before.

There are other signs, admittedly only faint, that the economy is on the mend. The U.S. Conference Board's index of leading indica-

tor, a basket of measures that act as an early warning system for where the economy is headed, surprised analysts by rising for two consecutive months in December and January. While consumer confidence levels and the unemployment rate skirted most of the headlines, they are lagging indicators, meaning that these stats say more about where the economy was a month ago than where it will be six months from now. Unemployment can continue to rise for as long as six months after a recession has officially ended.

Some are also looking closer at America's new-found fragility. After years of living beyond their means, the savings rate in the U.S. hit first place in January, the highest level since 1991. That's a good sign the excess that caused the financial crisis in the first place is abating. Using "This whole thing was driven by consumer vastly overspending for a decade," says Chris Thornburgh, an economist with Los Angeles-based Rescon Economics, who performs the conventional wisdom. "When incomes rise, that's right per cent at a, the primary driver of the economic rebound will be over with. There we're in close up mode." The fact that retail sales and consumer spending have at some time ended up could help the economy recover while people repair their wavy finances.

While pessimism has become the pervasive tendency, one long-range gauge of economic suffering has failed to keep pace. In the 1960s economists combined the rates of unemployment and inflation to arrive at the "misery index." But while the misery index typically goes low of a situation when times turn hard, it's largely ignored now. That's because, with inflation at less than one per cent, the misery index sits just above eight per cent, a far cry from the 21.9 per cent it peaked at in 1982. Many expect inflation to rise as a result of all the big-brother central banks have pumped into the economy. But for now this traditional yardstick of misery suggests some of the gloom is overblown.

What remains to be seen is how successful all the various government stimulus programs will be. Later this month, for instance, the U.S. Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve will roll up a massive program intended to jump-start lending for automobiles, credit cards and small businesses. The program could inject up to \$500 billion into the economic bloodstream. "If you look around the world at the U.S., China, Canada, there's a lot of action being taken," says Paul Karickhoff.

But for all the talk of leading indicators and stimulus programs, Karickhoff remains deeply moved in the history of the Great Depression, of all places. Country to what

most people believe, the 1930s were not all dark, unrelenting misery. Instead there were two separate downturns, divided by four years of tremendous growth during which time the U.S. economy expanded by 9.4 per cent. That growth came despite a series of terrible policy decisions in the early part of the decade. The Street Hawley Bull! Act threw up pro-

tectionist trade barriers and caused global trade to collapse. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates by two full percentage points in the conventional wisdom. And Washington lifted the top marginal income tax to 63 per cent from 25 per cent as it was supposed to be a tax cut. But the U.S. economy could over-

come all of these hurdles and still grow again. Some say we can expect a repeat performance. It's remarkable the economy was able to recover in the spring of 1937," says Karickhoff. "When I look back at what we do to prevent a recession, and I look at today's environment, at which's being done to promote a recovery, it gives me reason to be hopeful."

Warren Buffett, the world's most famous value investor, offered a similar message in a TV interview last week. While most focused on his observation that the economy had "fallen off a cliff," he also said he believes in the American economy's ability to right itself. "Everything will be all right," he said. "We do have the greatest economic machine that man has ever created."

Don't get Karickhoff wrong. He still sees serious problems in the economy. He also admits that he looks to the early 1930s forecasts. But then on the TV today and the money raised by economists and pundits is out of sync with reality. This isn't the Great Depression. It's a recession like so many others we've recovered from. But chances are you won't have money experts expounding that point of view. At least, not until the recovery is well underway. ■

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## DESPITE THE MARKET CRASH, THERE'S US\$4 TRILLION ON THE SIDELINES, WAITING TO BE INVESTED

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### REMEMBERING A BRAVE BUILDER OF A NEW WORLD

"No one defines what we do as well as we do. He may be a gift, and may be a thief, who know him and loved him. He is first citizen in the history of a new world of course, and I have the honor of a new world." —Capt. Roy Laughton's praise for the Sir John A. Macdonald, Royal Canadian Regiment, during a ceremony in Afghanistan for Thorpe Marc Doh. Doh was killed by a roadside bomb last weekend, less than a month before he was due to leave home.



Even before the recession began, many in the West were already pruned for Armageddon. The terrorist attacks in 9/11 shocked all a publishing boom in farbooks about the end of the American Empire. Climate change fears reached a fever pitch with warnings by the World Bank's first





# CONFIDENCE MAN

**Upbeat and daring, Mark Carney takes the Bank of Canada into uncharted waters**

**BY JOHN GEDDES** • Central bankers aren't often looked to for a steady supply of lively quips. They're usually so worried about spooking financial markets that they touch every phrase in monetary mumbo-jumbo and economic esoptrics. But Mark Carney, who took over as governor of the Bank of Canada early last year, has a penchant for a way of expressing himself.

Most these nervous leaders who get the world into its current economic mess, he has observed that they were too easily daunted by "experts" the duques of Daron. "Concerning the skeptics who doubt that virtuous policies will restore growth, he's learned that 'the laws of economics have not been so periled.' And to those who say he's too much of an optimist, Carney would retort, "We don't do optimism, we don't do pessimism. We do realism at the Bank of Canada."

It's risky realism, a touch dandyish perhaps, and more than a touch self-assured. And it all comes, not from a typical central

bank boss, seasoned and gray, but from a 43-year-old former financial markets wonder-kind, whose experience in government stretches back only to 2003. Carney flew fast from Ottawa's loftiest economic perch, only to find himself looking out over the bleakest economic landscape in at least a generation. Tirtha style so far has been defined by what passes, these days, for a distinctly positive outlook.

Carney's willingness to see light at the end of the tunnel might eventually make him appear prescient. Or tonight make him seem Pollyannish. What's clear already is that, right or wrong, he has emerged as the most distinctive voice on the federal scene on by far the most pressing challenge of the moment. "It's just that his voice is direct," says David Lauder, a veteran Bank of Canada watcher and University of Western Ontario economics professor. "It's a few more old-school [quips], get more attention than he wants, it might make him think twice before he makes the next."

For now, though, an often said signal is glad to get to know Carney. It's not just his knack for a memorable phrase. He's a notable presence at Ottawa social events, particularly in younger crowds that crowd outside the

establishment mainstream circles in which previous bank governors tended to move. Instantly at ease, invariably poised, he is the picture of the elite, globe-trotting player. He grew up in Edmonton, where his father was a professor of education history at the University of Alberta, before earning economics degrees from Harvard and Oxford. Rising the upstair of a 25-year private sector career at Goldman Sachs, he worked in London, Tokyo and New York, before returning to Canada as the global financial firm's emerging director of investment banking in Toronto.

It was there that then Bank of Canada governor David Dodge recruited him six years ago. Friends say public servant was the last. Ottawa's manageable scale and pace might also have enticed Carney and his wife, Diana, an economist he met at Oxford, have four young daughters. After a brief stint at the bank, he shifted quickly to the Federal Finance Department, where he made an impression, overseeing the multi-billion dollar sale of Ottawa's stake in Petro-Canada, and proving he was no yachtsman by successfully pressing the Conservatives to break a previous campaign pledge by taking income cuts.

When Dodge was ready to retire, Carney's

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# He's getting better, but is he good enough?



ANDREW COYNE

Nothing about Michael Ignatieff offended Canadian politics, about the time of his first run for Liberal leader, Michael ran a cover story on him with the miserable title, "Any good enough for Michael Ignatieff?" It was a fancy lie, but it also captured the real dilemma that confronts him, as a politician and liberal who is shortening off in democratic politics, an international media star among the, at all places, Canada.

Politics is always a complicated array of measurements and measurements, the public's as much as the candidate's. We want them to be better than us in some way, and yet the same as us in others. They have to want the job, but not to want it. It's money, not to say choice, process, but also irreducibly subtle: we have such finely tuned antennae, we listen, for reading each other's needs and weaknesses—often through a TV set. I suppose what we really want is someone secure enough in himself to be willing to expose himself for our benefit.

The explanation that demands from the candidate is particularly acute for those who pose of conspicuous talents, or asymmetric bearing, or more often traits that mark them out from the rest of us. There can be a blessing, or a curse, depending on the taste, or, in fact, with which they are displayed: this instant for the appropriate, this ability to feel, without undue calculation or effort, the privacy right word or gesture, to convey that honesty confidence we all crave. Kennedy had it. Trudeau, admitted equality to those who despised him, did so well. And Ignatieff? Not so much.

It's a puzzle in some ways to dissect and self-assured, another way so unworldly, even bumbling. Those first two years with excruciating. Those first two years with excruciating. The sheer number of books dropped—over Quebec, over Lebanon and Israel, later in that popular piece in the New York Times

in which he explained his recent recanting of his support for the war in Iraq in a matter of political "reality" was an academic "theory"—made him something of a figure of fun, as did his occasional distal of theory ("I am a fan of the genre of hockey, but not a miserably a hockey fan.")

Even when he was not wandering visibly off-kilter, the criticism was of two orders. When, at the height of last fall's campaign crisis, he attempted to translate himself, publicly justifying the coalition even as he, or unnamed sources, privately disavowed it, his signifier, along with that of every other Liberal MP, was on that letter to the Governor General formally requesting that she call upon the coalition to govern, but look here, he was the last one to sign it—all assured just a little too slow.



## It's a puzzle: in some ways so elegant and self-assured, in others so bumbling

Since then, however—and especially since taking over the leadership from Stéphane Dion and dislodging him from Bob Rae, with Ignatieff's personal approval rising ahead of the Prime Minister's. But of course, he has much more work to do before he can even think of being the electorate, not least ignoring some odds as his wayward party (the court of the president of Afghanistan: he controls the capital, but out in the provinces, all is in the hands of the warlords.) Pandering, opportunism, plying the Liberals are better off of this. And they are at war in the Senate, ready to tear his fragile, milk-borne public image to shreds: his 10-year absence from the country, his total loss of a, his high-level background, all will be used against him, proving on our sense of him, our secret doubt that he is "one of us." Perhaps it will be the most cruel that Michael Ignatieff is not yet good enough for us.

support the budget. Yet he was able to do so without appearing weak: it was the Tories who were seen to have capitulated to the Liberals, and not the other way around. Another potentially damaging episode, in which a half dozen Liberal MPs from Newfoundland broke ranks to vote against the budget, was likewise defused without losing ground.

In the House, he has been dignified, or at least to us Canadian politics goes, with the position that one keeps more or less in check. His strategy is much out to the West, to rural Canada, and to lower-middle conditions the Liberals have tended to ignore, or actively misinterpreted—have been well received, if wary. Most of all, he has accomplished that most difficult of feats, for an opposition leader: getting outside. And it's begun to pay off: the Liberals have done even in the polls, or more



so, with the Conservatives. Some polls put Ignatieff's personal approval rising ahead of the Prime Minister's.

But of course, he has much more work to do before he can even think of being the electorate, not least ignoring some odds as his wayward party (the court of the president of Afghanistan: he controls the capital, but out in the provinces, all is in the hands of the warlords.) Pandering, opportunism, plying the Liberals are better off of this. And they are at war in the Senate, ready to tear his fragile, milk-borne public image to shreds: his 10-year absence from the country, his total loss of a, his high-level background, all will be used against him, proving on our sense of him, our secret doubt that he is "one of us." Perhaps it will be the most cruel that Michael Ignatieff is not yet good enough for us.

ON THE WEB: For more Andrew Coyne, visit his blog at [www.macleans.ca/andrewcoyne/](http://www.macleans.ca/andrewcoyne/)

DAVID THOMAS/CTV/1010P

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL GOODMAN, BRONX PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOODMAN

CAPITAL DAILY

# MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON HARPER'S HAIRSTYLIST AND THE 'SLUMDOG' STAR'S OPINION OF CALGARY

## THE ANTI-JULIE COUILLARD

As this year's Politics in the Press goes, the Writers' Trust of Canada awarded the 2010/2011 *Shogakukan* Cohen Prize for political writing to James O'Rourke for his *Ignatieff: A Biography*. Offering a *Shogakukan* Award in the Twenty-first Century. Last year, Maxine Bernier arrived at the event with Julie Couillard in a tight gold dress. Tissues were given to the year Bernier was spotted walking in with someone a little less flamboyant: fellow Tory MP Ted Menzies, wearing a bow tie and a commercial in his family's name. One MP quipped that Couillard really should have been invited, noting that she did, in fact, write a book. As this story has been filled with images and pictures, I thought Minister Jason Kenney, then prime Minister John Baird, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who spent time greeting the glamorous *Shogakukan* Capovilla, who was standing in front of the Press. Capovilla knows these politicians' true colours: she's their hairdresser. She's the critical voice who's who of Ottawa's political elite thanks to PMO staffer Aaron Campbell, who first visited her while the Conservatives were in opposition and then started recommending her to his own boss, Stephen Harper's hair. The girl's involvement was provided by a Canadian friend, then from Guy, who was sent next to Lauren Harper. But Harper's underdog and shy, living had not sitting MP on the show, he still has to pay taxes. During his residence, the light's kept going on and off. The story was solved when it turned out that Mrs. Harper's RCMP guard was leaning on the light when the *Shogakukan* Chairman Laurent Lacroix.



TED MENZIES (left) and Maxine Bernier (top left), then (clockwise) Peter Dinkoff, Brent Butt, Lauren Harper, Karen and Jim Prentiss, Marjorie LeBlond and page, John Baird with Marjorie LeBlond, Shogakukan award prize, Guy Pratt



TED MENZIES (left) and Maxine Bernier (top left), then (clockwise) Peter Dinkoff, Brent Butt, Lauren Harper, Karen and Jim Prentiss, Marjorie LeBlond and page, John Baird with Marjorie LeBlond, Shogakukan award prize, Guy Pratt

ing a how to be always just him self. "Wearing a clip on bow tie to the wedding and under a suit, I quipped 'Trudeau, who wears a clip on occasion, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, on the other hand, who was spotted later in Politics & the Press wearing a clip on bow tie, confirmed he couldn't be one himself. Can life depend on it. Perhaps he might want to do what Greg MacEachern (former aide to Bill Clinton) does, go to Hooters and ask them to let him for you.

## ILL GET MY OWN WATER, THANKS

This year's Senate pages were recently sworn in and are now slowly getting into their groove. This includes finding water for senators. Well, for most of them. They found that Marjorie LeBlond was almost out of water for water. She used to be a staffer on the Hill, and is sympathetic about asking folks to do manual tasks. If she has to speak and has no water, she just looks for a clean full glass at another senator's empty seat.

## 'SLUMDOG' MEETS CALGARY

Before bowling a strike from Calgary to the west, *Slumdog Millionaire* star Dev Patel among the fellow passengers. When asked for an anecdote, Patel told her he was in Calgary to meet the visit he would be with on his first film. Patel said he had to study a script. Patel said he had to have his hotel room for three days because the city was too cold. ■

ON THE WEB: For more travel on cities or to contact Mitchell Rapoport, visit [www.mitchelrapoport.com](http://www.mitchelrapoport.com)



A 2007 DEMONSTRATION against the Iranian regime in London, England: questions about who should speak for the Iranian opposition

# HOSTED BY TERRORISTS?

**An organization in Ottawa's bad books winned and dined Canadian politicians**

**BY MICHAEL PETROU** • Eight current and former Canadian parliamentarians attended a conference and dined in Paris last summer that was organized by the political wing of an Iranian opposition group that Canada and the United States have designated as a terrorist organization. An event held near some of their expenses covered by supporters of the banned group. The vice shows how difficult it can be for Western politicians to resist the confusing waters of Iranian politics, where even those opposed to the theocracy in Tehran can be tainted by accusations of violence and human rights abuses.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran staged a massive rally in Paris last June to support its now-defunct military wing, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, also known as the Mojahedes-e-Khalq, or simply the People's Mojahedin. The group attracted hundreds of politicians from around the world, and Maryam Rajavi, "president-elect" of the NCRI, met with many of them at her home outside Paris. Canadian politicians who attended included Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett, Yasmin Razavi and Ray

mond Fikou, Elise Guilbault MP, Mollie Koffe, Andrew Torgler and Tim Wappel, who won Liberal MP in the first but are no longer, and Liberal Senator David Strang. David Koffe, who met with a Progressive Conservative and Liberal MP before leaving politics as an independent in 2004, was also there. Bennett and Torgler were given a little less than \$2,000 each toward transportation, accommodation, and meals. Wappel's bill for the week totalled \$3,750. Strang says he was part of free of charge in a hotel.

The People's Mojahedin was officially designated as a terrorist group by Canada's Liberal government in May 2001. The Conservatives upheld this decision in November 2008. The U.S. State Department considers the People's Mojahedin and the NCRI as simply different names for the same organization. Despite numerous requests by the U.S. State, officials with the Department of Public Safety would not say whether Canada denies funding between the two.

Based in Iran but with supporters all over the world, the People's Mojahedin aimed the overthrow of Iran's theocracy. It has led out numerous killings, military raids, and assassinations in Iran since its formation in 1967. These included the murder of American military personnel and civilians in Iran during the 1980s, as part of its efforts to help overthrow the shah in 1979.

The group found safe haven in Iraq under Saddam Hussein during 1980 and allied with Iraqis in war against Iran. Shortly after a ceasefire between the two warring nations was announced, in July 1988, the People's Mojahedin invaded Iran from Iraq, believing that the Iranian government was on the verge of collapse. The invaders were easily repulsed, and Iran executed as many as 5,000 political prisoners sent afterwards—most of whom were supporters of the People's Mojahedin. People's Mojahedin fighters based in Iraq also reportedly took part in the Iraqi Republican Guard's bloody repression of Kurds and Shia Arabs in 1991.

The group has not been linked to any violent incidents since 2001 and was recently removed from British and European Union lists of terrorist organizations. The National Council of Resistance of Iran says its goal is the establishment of a secular democracy in Iran. Its supporters include Western journalists, as well as many Western politicians. People's Mojahedin members made Iran appear to be well organized and have passed on a vital legacy to the Grand State, despite the fact it is a terrorist organization. The supporters are now left to support for the People's Mojahedin during ordinary Iranian during a visit in 2004—though some Iranian political prisoners, in a personal letter, has since protest-

the kindness of the People's Mojahedin members with whom he is jailed.

Mehdi Tavakoli, a professor of history and war and arms studies at the University of Toronto, says some Iranians have never forgotten that the People's Mojahedin joined forces with Saddam Hussein and invaded their country. "Iranians will not forgive them for that," Tavakoli says. "Even secular Iranians who have been as opposed to the Islamic Republic, they do not forgive the People's Mojahedin and the National Council of Resistance for their collaboration with Saddam Hussein. The collaboration and the National Council of Resistance does have credibility with the Iranian people. It does have some hard-core supporters. But that's it."

China, including other Iranian opposition groups as well as the U.S. State Department, describe the NCRI as a personality cult built around Maryam Rajavi and her husband, Massoud, who hasn't been seen in public for years. Several of its supporters, including at least one Canadian, list it themselves as a law during public protests. A 2005 Human Rights Watch report accused the People's Mojahedin of severe human rights violations as it spreading "Camp Ashraf" head quarters in Iraq, before the camp was dismantled by American forces in 2003. These violations included subjecting dissenters to harsh conditions, sexual abuse, and, in some cases, murder. (The latter of the camp's 1,500 residents, who include scores of Canadians, is unclear. The Immigration and Citizenship department says that the People's Mojahedin members they will be jailed or worse should they return to Iran.)

Canadian delegates to Paris appear to have been aware that they would be attending NCRI events. Wappel described the purpose of his trip to the ethics commissioner as "to meet with representatives of the National Council of Resistance of Iran." He told Maclean's that he supports the removal of the People's Mojahedin from Canada's list of banned terrorist groups. According to a press release from the NCRI's foreign affairs committee, Wappel, Fikou, and Razavi all attended a meeting hosted by Rajavi, where they also pledged to work at getting the People's Mojahedin removed from Canada's list of terrorist groups.

Tavakoli, the University of Toronto professor, says he can understand why Western politicians might want to support the National Council of Resistance of Iran. "The current regime in Tehran is illiberal and often brutal. And supporters of the NCRI present themselves as the only viable alternative. "I beg

to differ," Tavakoli says. "They present themselves as a democratic alternative to the Islamic Republic, with the hope of overthrowing the regime. But democratic involvement is really being involved in building grassroots organizations, and they are not interested in that. They view themselves as a vanguard political organization, and vanguards do not have patience for doing the dirty work of democracy. I don't think the National Council of Resistance, with any kind of sense of imagination, represents the Iranian/foreign community and their democratic aspirations."

Bennett, Wappel and Torgler told the ethics commissioner their expenses were covered by the "Iran Democratic Association." Yes, a spokesperson for the group who

NCRI "president-elect" Maryam Rajavi has been accused of running a personality cult



## THE NCRI'S SUPPORTERS SAY THE GROUP HAS TURNED ITS BACK ON VIOLENCE

ailed that he has lost nerve not be pressed to present relatives in Iran, describe the also supporters' members to "supporters and sympathizers" of the NCRI but not formally part of the organization. "As far as I'm concerned and my colleagues are concerned, we believe that this group can realize what our goals are—a nuclear free, secular Iran." He is an interview with Maclean's. "There is no other alternative that ends against the brutality of the Iranian regime."



Carolyn Bennett, in an interview with Maclean's, acknowledged the People's Mojahedin's violent history but says it has evolved. "Obviously, some people who were involved in it at the past have been removed of, you know, as we would say, 'worse,'" she said. "But like so many of these situations, more often, whether you're in Northern Ireland or South Africa, there are people who are violent and who are now fighting for democracy." David Strang, the senator, also described the People's Mojahedin's violent past as "a complex and often born rap." Yasmin Razavi was recently claimed that the People's Mojahedin has not been armed for more than 20 years. In fact, when Camp Ashraf was dismantled in 2003, the People's Mojahedin relinquished more than 2,000 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and heavy artillery pieces.

Although no Conservative MPs attended the NCRI's rally and meetings in Paris last summer, the group has drawn Conservative support in the past. Paul Fierstein, a Conservative MP until his defeat in the 2006 election, reportedly attended an NCRI rally in Paris and remains a strong supporter of the group. In April 2006, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, then the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister for multilateralism, spoke at a small rally on Parliament Hill held by apparent supporters of the People's Mojahedin. A photo of Bennett and Fierstein, the group appeared in the website of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Kenney later disavowed the photo, instead to give a speech by a group calling itself the Committee for Human Rights in Iran and said he had no idea the group was linked to the People's Mojahedin.

Diana Cadore, the Liberal defence critic, didn't accept this explanation and called on Kenney to apologize and denounce the People's Mojahedin. "A terrorist group is a terrorist group," said Cadore. "Jason Kenney, who likes to play politics and who's as subtle as Barney Rubble in politics, he should do better than that." Maclean's called Cadore's office to find out how he felt about his Liberal colleagues attending a People's Mojahedin rally and taking money from supporters of the group, but he had not responded to a request for an interview. ■

## CHINA: DISASTER ZONE NOW A FUN PARK

Seeking to turn disaster into fun, Beijing's Communist officials are turning last year's earthquake-stricken area into a tourist park. Visitors can go boating in the "Spine Lake," a body of water created by flooding and landslides, with a museum with an earthquake simulator, and see a school where students were buried by tonnes of concrete. Officially, the park is the idea after New Year's people recently visited the disaster zone during Chinese New Year.

# FINE ART AND HOWITZERS

**保利科技有限公司**  
POLY TECHNOLOGIES, INC.



## A murky Chinese makes arms company likes bronzes—and despots

BY ALEXANDRA SHIMO • The bronzes of a rebel and a rat, sculpted in bronze, have been at the center of a diplomatic furore in recent weeks. The smallish bronzes, about 10 years old, were about to be auctioned off as part of Yves Saint-Laurent's estate, while that was first one claimed by the Chinese government, then sabotaged by a collector who made the winning bid but refused to pay, saying he had snared out of a series of Chinese paintings. Indeed, the sculptures symbolize a mixture of nationalism in China's history: they are part of a art of 11 taken from the emperor's summer palace after Anglo-French forces burned and pillaged the building in 1860. Beijing has claimed the most high ground, saying the bronzes are part of the birthrights of the Chinese people and should be returned. But where are the others? Five are missing, two are owned privately, and the remaining five—despite Beijing's high-minded indignation—were in the hands of successive Chinese state-owned museums in the past century, a company that has floated U.S. law on arms trafficking and has come under intense worldwide criticism for fueling wars in Asia and Africa.

Founded by the Chinese army, and run by the elite in the Communist party, Poly Techologies—which has interests in real estate as well as in engineering and mining—has arms trading offices in several unstable or despotic countries including Zimbabwe, Sudan, Liberia, Indonesia, Sudan and Burma. It has

seeded worldwide criticism for its arms trading as several concerns, most recently for dealings with Zimbabwesi President Robert Mugabe. In April 2008, a 75-ton sea freighter loaded with Poly's guns and ammunition was anchored in the port of Durban. In final destination was Zimbabwe, and with many human rights groups worried that the cargo would be used against Mugabe's opponents, South African dockworkers refused to unload the arms. The freighter left South Africa, but the fate of the weapons remains unclear. China promised that the ship had gone home. Other reports, however, say it headed to Angola, and the arms were then transported by air to Zimbabwe.

That's not the first time Poly has dealt with despots, says

Richard Fisher, a senior fellow with the U.S. National Assessment and Strategy Center and author of China's Military Modernization, *Building for Regional and Global Reach*. The company has set up shop in Khartoum, and deals weapons to the Sudanese government despite international criticism and concern that they are being used to escalate the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Poly also has an office in Burma, and deals with arms, such as rocket guns, howitzers, machine guns, and other weapons to the rising military junta. Many countries,

including Canada, the United States and the European Union, have criticized China for propping up the tyrannical regime.

For the most part, though, Poly tries to keep a low profile. Most of the company's activities are considered Chinese state secrets, says Dennis Wilder, a fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institution and former National Security Council senior director for Asian affairs. Poly refused an interview with *Newsweek*. "The company has no interest in full disclosure of their activities," Wilder says. "Some of its dealings are with regime states, so they do not want a lot of scrutiny."

Acquisition was a 1994 U.S. government sting—which was the largest in U.S. history.

For more than a year, Poly's agents had negotiated with U.S. security agencies disguised as criminal gun smugglers. They said they could deliver selected machine guns, revolvers, rifles, Chinese knock-off U.S. tanks, and even surface-to-air "Red Phoenix" missiles, which "could take out a 747" commercial airliner, according to subsequent court documents. When the freighter full of Chinese weapons docked in Oakland, Calif., in March of that year, U.S. agents, including employees of Poly and Navistar, another state-owned Chinese arms manufacturer, were around.

Poly's activities are "suspicious enough to resemble a plot to assassinate a president," says James Mulhern, director of the Center for Intelligent Research and Analysis at Defense Group Inc., a Washington-based think tank. As well as its arms trade with rogue regimes, it is involved

in art collection. It owns rare books and manuscripts, contemporary and classical paintings, ceramics, jade jewelry, calligraphy, and of course, the five bronze heads, acquired through a person and gifts by a person one believes. Says Mulhern: "The Chinese government has decided that acquiring cultural artifacts and selling weapons are both in the national interest. And it couldn't give a rat's ass who they made weapons to, whether their political or human rights agenda." ■



**POLY'S AFFAIRS SEEM LIKE A PLOT IN A NOVEL**



Poly Technologies owns five of the five bronze heads, but deals arms to Zimbabwe.



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## IRA killings escalate as recession hits

BY PATRICIA VERGEE • A sudden resurgence in killings by IRA breakaway groups in Northern Ireland has experts worried that as the local economy falters, youth could once again be drawn into violence. Almost a decade of relative peace was shattered by the shooting deaths of two British soldiers outside army barracks in Antrim on Saturday, followed by the brutal killing of a police officer on Monday.



**TWO SOLDIERS** were killed at the Massamare Barracks on Saturday

While the seed of the operation surprised many, there have been a number of violence incidents from the Real IRA, which claimed responsibility for the attack on British soldiers. (The second killing, which took place in Craigavon, was denied by Continuity IRA, another IRA breakaway group.)

In November, the Independent Monitoring Commission reported a battery of attacks by the Real IRA—known for the horrific Omagh bombing that killed 29 in 1998—including bombings, shootings and an assault on a republican politician. It warned that the Real IRA "is a serious and continuing threat," and in January, experts defused a 150 kg car bomb attached to the group. Just before the most recent attacks, security forces estimated the threat level from "substantial" to "severe."

In response to the killings, armed vehicles have replaced police cars in some areas and security roadblocks have increased. But John McGarry, Canada Research Chair in International and Democracy, worries that if the British response is too heavy handed, it could play into the hands of extremists.

Nevan Adams, a research fellow at the Centre for Global Peace and Conflict Studies in Irvine, Calif., says many fear that as the country's economic growth falters, unemployed youth might turn to paramilitary groups. Ireland has already endured a profound recession in the 1990s, and that "doesn't hold well for what's coming down the line."

## Biker gang warfare rocks Copenhagen

BY RACHEL MENDLSON • When the leaders of the Hells Angels and Bandidos declared a truce on Danish TV in 1997, the residents of Copenhagen breathed a sigh of relief. The handshake ended a Scandinavian biker war that had raged the city and nearby placed strain on a battlefield, and left 77 people dead. But just over a decade later, rival gangs are once again warring, sometimes with bullets. Since last summer, an apparent truce was between the Hells Angels and immigrant gangs has been blamed for 40 shootings in the capital, a situation Justice Minister Niels Højlund called "unstable and unacceptable."

While Danish officials say the biker war in Copenhagen's historic downtown trade district hasn't spilled into the city's streets, evidence of racial undertones. Most of the violence has played out on the streets of the Nørrebro district, which is largely made up of Danes and immigrants. According to a recent exchange on the Hells Angels website, the group "doesn't want to go to prison, [but] we are tired of the mentality that some immigrants have."

Copenhagen has long had a reputation as a peaceful and tolerant city, but it's clear that the gang problem is getting worse. Since 2008, when police counted a total of about 140 members, the numbers have risen to an estimated 1,300 individuals in biker and immigrant gangs.



**THE SPIKE** in gang warfare may have racial undertones

Two weeks ago, three separate shootings left two dead and four injured. Meanwhile, a random police car has stopped delivering to Nørrebro, citing threats from gangs. While denied, the government introduced legislation that would double maximum sentences for gang-related crimes. Says Højlund, "Biker and immigrant gangs will not have a moment's peace"—which, residents are hoping, will restore theirs.

## Iranian porn actors could face death

BY MICHAEL PETROS • Police in Iran have arrested a group of "beautiful young women" and charged them with making pornographic films—a crime that carries the death penalty in that country—according to the pro-reform Iranian website Parva.

The website cited a source in the office of an Iranian law enforcement agency who said the arrested women have already produced several amateur films for sale on the black market. The director of the films was also



**POLICE** in Iran are increasing their focus on 'moral corruption'

reportedly enticed. It is not known how many actors and directors have been jailed.

Iran's pornography industry caused MPs to pass legislation in 2007 approving the execution of those caught making pornographic films. The bill states that anyone charged with producing pornography may be sentenced to "execution of the world"—a phrase lifted from the Quran which refers to those who deserve the death penalty.

Iran's biker gangs have been involved in political and social protests. For instance, a radical newspaper in a Tehran pharmacy's window has a cloth obscuring its posters. When asked to cover their heads. And alcohol is forbidden. But many Iranians, especially those who are young, urban, and middle class, have a more liberal outlook than their country's ruling politicians. Away from the prying eyes of the state's religious enforcers, the hedonists come out. Alcohol is offered to guests. And well-dressed Iranian men wear videos—and pornography—on living rooms.

Those young Iranians, who have no memory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and little interest in its legacy, are increasingly being viewed as a threat by conservatives in the government, who are cracking down on "un-Islamic" deeds, and now pornography.

# THINKING THE UNTHINKABLES

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**Joe Stankiewicz**, Chief Economist for the Canadian Auto Workers  
» Update: Free trade

Canada has once again become a haven of greed, a haven of water and now, a sump of fear. This is the result of the structure of putting us into an unregulated continental agreement where our pipeline is as a nuclear wastehouse, and particularly as a drug warehouse.



**Michael Hart, Simon Ramo, and Simon Ramo**, Chair in Trade Policy, the Norwegian Petroleum School of International Affairs, California University

We need to rethink what we do with the border. Canadian customs agents are responsible for ensuring compliance with nearly 100 statutory requirements. On the U.S. side is 400. What we're asking the border for today is a convenient place to do regulatory compliance. Is this necessary?

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## Should we erase the Canada-U.S. border for the purposes of trade and labour mobility?

### ISSUES IN CONTINENTAL TRADE

World's biggest marketplace: Canadian trade with the U.S. totals \$600 billion a year, dwarfing all other bilateral trading relationships. But Canadian and U.S. exporters warn of a "thickening" of the border through an increasing number of new U.S. regulations. Are these rules erasing the advantages both nations enjoy under free trade?

Masters in our own house? Would greater harmonization of U.S.-Canadian trade regulations undermine the nation's sovereignty? Canada is already party to 730 international agreements, which obliges us to act or not act on a plethora of issues.

In the name of efficiency: Canada and the U.S. use the border to regulate trade. Various parts and assemblies of North American built automobiles pass back and forth over the border an average of seven times before completion, each time requiring separate customs inspections. Meanwhile, global supply chains have made country-of-origin determinations obsolete, along with the customs regulations that govern them.

# PAY UP OR GET OUT

**The middle-class life has been built on debt for over a decade. Now that bill is due.**

**BY JASON HERRY** • What happened Marcus Leach the most is how fast it all fell together. Six months ago he was working as a corporate security analyst at his old Montreal job in Ottawa, earning about \$22,000 a year. He knew the job was on shaky ground. But with three decades of experience, Leach was sure he could land another good job if need be. So when his wife, who had stayed home to raise and educate their three children, went to school to become a pharmacist last August, Leach thought nothing of tapping his flow of credit for the \$40,000 tuition. Nor did he fret much when he took out a mortgage of around \$280,000 for a new home in South Falls, Ont., or when he borrowed thousands to replace the family's two aging vehicles. In all, the family piled on more than \$400,000 in debt in the last few years. "When I was young if you got heavily into debt it was a very serious issue, but now it's just seen as normal," he says. "If you're an average middle-income family with two or three kids and only a single income, debt is the only way to keep the family going."

Then, last November, the hammer fell. Naomi told Leach, 46, that his last day would be Jan. 11. At first he took solace in the fact that after 20 years at the company he was due a generous payout of around \$100,000. But three days after clearing out his desk, Naomi filed for bankruptcy protection, nullifying any prospect of a severance cheque. All Leach got was \$20,000 in vacation pay, which is all the family had to live on since. With his hopes for quickly finding a new job shattered, the family has reluctantly scaled back. But Leach still continues to roll in, forcing Leach to sometimes resort to credit cards to make ends meet, sending the family even deeper into debt. With their finances spiraling down, he knows everything is at stake, including the roof over their heads. "I have no idea how we're going to eventually cover my way out of this situation," he says.



WITH HIS job gone and his house's value falling, all Leach is left with is a \$400,000 debt

For most of the last century, debt was a dirty word in Canada. People spent years saving up to buy a house in order to keep their mortgages to a minimum, and families that did find themselves in back scraped still saved to fight their way out. But starting in the 1990s our attitude to debt changed. As interest rates fell and soaring house prices made everyone feel richer, our nation of savers became a nation of borrowers. Debt emerged as the great enabler, the ticket to the trappings of a better life, to flat-screen TVs and shiny new SUVs.

Now the upward march of real estate has reversed course, taking the household net worth of Canadians with it. At the same time, a surge in job slips has made it impossible for thousands of Canadians to keep up with the TDUs raked up when times were good.

It's payback time, and it's a bill many Canadians can't afford. "Our grandparents used save for a rainy day," says Louise Campbell, executive director of Credit Canadian Toronto and co-author of *Household Debt: How to Stay on Top of It*. "Here we're not a staged debt after all."

We're now at the point where regular Canadians are carrying even more debt than Americans. It's true we used to save much more—so much so in 1990 we socked away 13 per cent of our disposable income—but the average debt carried by Canadian households has jumped 71 per cent since then to \$90,700, growing six times faster than the average household income. As of last year, we only saved three per cent of the money coming in the door, and according to the consulting firm Deloitte, the average Canadian family now owes more than 11 times its disposable income. That puts us in a slightly worse position than the typical American family, which owes just

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK COLEMAN



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over 1.2 per cent of the disposable income.

When house prices were rising, none of that seemed to matter. After all, our net worth was rising every year, so it looked like no matter how much we borrowed, we were still getting wealthier. But the sudden downturn in house prices has exposed much of that wealth as leverage. According to the Toronto National Bank House Price Index, house prices have already dropped by four per cent since last August on a national level, and in many cities on the west side, the slide has been much worse. Foreclosures are surging in Calgary, where lenders launched 175 proceedings in January, a 71 per cent jump over the same period last year, according to RealEstateCanada Information Systems. Similarly, there were more foreclosures filed in B.C.'s Supreme

courts in January than in the first three months of 2006. One credit card company capped her limit to \$15,000, even though the mortgage I'd ever owned was \$51,000 a year. "You never speak with a person at the bank, you're just a number, so the debt seems almost eternal," she says. "Without that easy credit I'd have been forced to take stock long ago."

Of course, everything has changed now. Credit is no longer easy, and the wealth of Canadians is no longer rising. The question now is, what will that mean for the millions whose reach once stretched that far? The answer, many feel, is a recession that, while painful, is also inevitable and could leave us in a more secure position when it's over. Already we're seeing signs of a recovery at a truly astonishing pace. In the fourth quarter of 2006, it was

consumers who spent 15.50 billion dollars, just as they're showing a glimmer of fiscal responsibility. "When people get off buying a new item, that trend starts to turn a lack of consumer confidence, but on the other hand it can be a very rational budgetary decision," he says. The numbers, though, seem to suggest that Lockheed needn't worry. Back in December, the Bank of Canada warned that even with our increased spending, the number of "vulnerable households" with a debt-to-income ratio above 40 per cent could double by the end of the year. Borrowing in order to spend more than we make has never been sustainable over long periods of time, and when it gets out of control, a recession like the one we have now always seems to ensue along to make sure we pay up.



THE PARADOX is they say the solution is to start borrowing and spending again, but that's what got us in trouble in the first place

Great in January alone than in the first five months of last year combined.

It's only been seven weeks our economy began to really unspool, but the fallout is already showing up in bankruptcy courts. The Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada recently reported that bankruptcy filings in December had shot up by nearly 50 per cent over the same period in 2007. Ellen Stevens, a self-employed haair stylist from Toronto (who asked that her real name not be used), is one of those being forced to declare bankruptcy, and the Whites are credit for the screams of her plight. After a general trauma side-lined her career a few years ago, Stevens says she began to use her credit cards to pay for food and rent. As the recession took hold, she was unable to land enough advertising contracts to make ends meet, and she amassed \$100,000 in debt. Yet, even though she wasn't running a steady paycheck, banks and credit card companies

back up to a 4.7 per cent, a big leap from 3.6 per cent in fourth quarter 2007. Our credit ratings are already shrinking, too. Last week CIBC World Markets said the average mortgage has fallen in rate by between five and 10 per cent, partly reflecting lower house prices. Even non-mortgage consumer credit growth has slowed to near zero, from 1.1 per cent earlier in the year. "The current pace of credit expansion is roughly half of what it was six months ago," senior economist Benjamin Tal recently calculated.

Still, there's a paradox at the heart of the current efforts to jump-start the economy, says Clarence Lockheed, executive director at the Vector Institute. The government and our central bank say the solution to our current crisis is to start borrowing and spending again. Yet that's exactly what got us into trouble in the first place. He worries the massive stimulus programs under way could drive

But while the slowdown may be necessary to balance our accounts, that's worse to suggest it will be pleasant. For thousands of Canadians like Lockheed, paying down debts that once seemed quite manageable will become a crushing and onerous process. As Lockheed says, even when he was barely limping toward recovery, he didn't feel like he was living the high life. They didn't go on lavish vacations. They drove inexpensive cars. His daughter's friends would giggle at the family's 24-inch "outage" TV from the early 1990s. Now, his job is gone and his house is no longer rising in value, leaving him only with a \$490,000 debt—half the hope that things will get better. He hopes that his 62-year-old wife will be able to land a steady job as a pharmacist. "If she can make \$30,000 a year and I can pay on \$10,000 a couple more months, we should be able to scrape by and keep the house," he says. "If not, things could get pretty bad." ■



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIAN GABLE

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# BITTER FEUD IN SUGAR

Canada's refining giants are suddenly at war. But why?

BY CATHY OLLI • Sweetberg's writes in the sweet and sticky world of Canadian sugar. After years of relative calm, it seems the two behemoths that make up Canada's sugar duopoly—Rudolph Sugar Ltd. and Rogers Sugar Income Fund—are suddenly spilling for a battle, and that has analysts and investors nervous.

Now, steady and profitable has long been the state of affairs in Canada's sugar business. But a few weeks ago, analysts warned that the giants had smoldered and arrived to be ready for a mutually destructive fight. Michael Van Acker at TD Securities released forecasting reports alerting investors that "rampant anticompetitive activity" had "reached a level not seen in over a decade," and he downgraded Rogers stock to "underperform" from "hold."

What's at the root of all the bedlam? Turns out, it all comes back to the loss of a single contract. And not even a real biggie.

Earlier this year, Rudolph managed to oust the Rogers as a contract to supply sugar to an Ontario-based retailer. According to analysts, the customers, Loblaw Cos., though neither sugar company nor the retailer will confirm it. That loss, however, reports Rogers, represents a merely one per cent of the total volume it ships every year.

Since 1995, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal has imposed various dumping legislation against the United States and Europe as a way of protecting Canadian companies from imports of cheap, foreign refined sugar. Every five years since then, when CITI has reviewed whether those duties should continue, the domestic heavy-hitters Rudolph and Rogers have succeeded in



RUDOLPH and Rogers Sugar control 96 per cent of the market thanks to federal tariffs.



visiting workings. That is, there's not much to behold. Per capita sugar consumption has not changed since the 1940s, according to the Canadian Sugar Institute. "It's a stable, solid kind of business," says one analyst. "It doesn't go anywhere."

Since 1995, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal has imposed various dumping legislation against the United States and Europe as a way of protecting Canadian companies from imports of cheap, foreign refined sugar. Every five years since then, when CITI has reviewed whether those duties should continue, the domestic heavy-hitters Rudolph and Rogers have succeeded in

maintaining the status quo.

As a result, Rogers and Rudolph hold roughly 96 per cent of the Canadian sugar market. The rest is spread between foreign companies, some of which say that the tariffs are the most pain, analysts say, Rudolph and Rogers have operated in relative harmony. There are plenty of industrial and retail customers to go around, and there doesn't seem to be much point in cannibalizing the industry. Ed Makin, president of Rogers, says "there's competition every single day in the marketplace," but both companies have seen relatively stable volumes and profits for several years now.

So why would Rudolph suddenly change the domestic equilibrium by actively pursuing the Ontario business held by Rogers?

One theory posited by some analysts is that American Sugar Refining Co., which has owned Rudolph since February 2007, has "drop products" and wants a bigger chunk of the Canadian market. It's simple: Rogers has always had just a little bit more market share, and Rudolph sees an opportunity to squeeze a rival. Its aggressive move has the potential to trigger a price war, and while that's good news for customers, analysts and investors worry it'll be trouble for profits.

But there's another hypothesis, which is far more legalistic. The CITI's next review of anti-dumping tariffs is slated to begin in 2010, and at least one cynical observer suggests that Rogers and Rudolph need to demonstrate that the domestic market is already highly competitive, to bolster their argument that the tariffs must remain in place. After all, if the two companies are already slugging it out furiously, there's little incentive for regulators to open the doors to more foreign competitors and risk shaking the market.

That, of course, sugar speculation. Mike Smith at the auction that the two companies are currently disputing is a show for federal trade regulators. Rudolph declined to comment for this story. But could a little competition between Rogers and Rudolph actually end up benefiting both companies? "Well, if it does, it does," Makin says.

This much is clear: pretty much all industrial consumers who make candy with Canadian sugar and grocers who sell to the public might benefit from lower prices. And for now, sugar pitting is a lot less boring than usual. ■



**BUS DRIVER HITS CRIME-FIGHTING POODLE FOR FUN**  
Police cite a municipal bus driver on Wednesday praised on his route last weekend to punch out a dog dressed as a crime-fighting mascot. Sweetberg is alleged to have befriended Officer Tyrone Herby, who was dressed as McGuffin the Crime Dog, on a street corner where children were watching. Herby told cops afterwards that he did it to be funny. Says a Washington Metrobus spokeswoman: "His future with the dog and this is under review."

STYLING: LARRY MCGILLICUPE

# ECONOWATCH

A WEEKLY SCORECARD ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY IN NORTH AMERICA AND BEYOND

LATEST INTELLIGENCE



STEVE MACHI

What happens when interest rates have been cut to lower than zero, and things still seem to be getting worse? For all those who've ever wondered about that worst-case scenario for monetary policy, you're about to get your answer. It's "synaptic lock" was the buzz word of the fall, and "fiscal stimulus" dominated the winter, getting ready to add "quantitative easing" to your vocabulary.

Here's the setup: last week the Bank of Canada cut its benchmark interest rate to an unprecedented low of 0.5 per cent. The bank likely can't cut any further. So what now? Traditionally, central banks use interest rates and money supply to ensure that commercial banks have enough liquidity and liquidity to lend. Beyond that, they care mostly about keeping inflation in check. But with private institutions and commercial banks around the world struggling with plunging asset values, rising loan losses, and slowing trade, the playbook has become more of a "B" ring on the "quantitative easing."

That's what TD Securities analyst Eric Lau calls it: the "synaptic lock," and it essentially involves the Bank of Canada (and other central banks) buying government securities, such as corporate bonds and asset-backed securities. In theory, this could drive down bond yields, improve liquidity, and generally make it easier for business to operate. Once the waters of the four seasons, the bank will quietly back out of the market and everything will go back to normal. It's a great theory. It's also never really been tried on this scale.

In recent months, a war old sage gave a reputation package to the hero with a warning: "That box is very dangerous. Only open it if absolutely necessary. If you do, things could get better, or they could get a lot worse." Well, central banks around the world are now reaching for the mysterious box. Seen we'll all find out what's inside.

On the bright side, Robert Barro, a professor of economics at Harvard University, estimates that there is a 20 per cent chance the United States (and thus the rest of the world) will fall into a depression. That means there's a 80 per cent chance we won't. Those are decent odds, and hey—the cynics have always worked in the movies.

steve.machi@maclean's.com

## THE GOOD NEWS

### Signs of life at the mall

After a dismal holiday season, U.S. retailers saw a 0.7 per cent rise in February sales, down sales from a year ago. And while department stores, luxury brands and retailers are suffering, discounters like Wal-Mart are bucking the trend. The world's biggest retail chain has seen sales rise 5.1 per cent in 2008. Other winners include Costco and Sears's Club.

### Credit card restraint

Weak holiday retail sales in 2008 resulted in a more responsible use of credit cards. The percentage of people using their 90 days behind on their payments fell by 31 per cent in the final quarter of last year.

### Hot times in the City

Groupings, which was the world's biggest bank until the financial crisis, dropped its 2008 loss from \$1.6 billion to \$1.3 billion. The bank's profit in the first six months of this year—ending last week—has been the same as last year's.

### Calmer seas

You have to be a real nerd to pay attention to the Baltic Dry Index. That's why nerds are breathing a little easier this week. The BDI tracks the cost of seaborne shipping, and in other an early gauge of global trade. This week the index hit 2,100, up from the 2007 low of 1,100 in December (though still far off its May peak of 11,700).



## THE BAD NEWS

### Take this job and eat it

The American job market continues to be a better show. First employment firm Challenger Gray & Christmas released its monthly survey showing 651,000 new jobs were added in the first quarter of last year.

Even as the economy sputters, just as we're about to hit 18 million people unemployed in the U.S. and 6.5 million in Canada.

### Surprise!

Everybody knows that most of the economic data from around the world is wrong, but the cost of economic surprise (surveys that are either better or worse than projections) and that index continues to drive down by almost 20 per cent since September. The latest number to hit approval: Canadian housing starts. Everybody knew they'd be bad, but not this bad. Home construction is running less than half the pace of a year ago.



But not this bad. Home construction is running less than half the pace of a year ago.

### Services & factories slide

The Institute for Supply Management reports that private manufacturers across the U.S. are only up one point in February. The "grace of service-sector activity, which accounts for about 80 per cent of the economy and more than three-quarters of employment, was 41.6 (anything below 50 indicates contraction). The BNA manufacturing index, meanwhile, came in at 35.8—the 13th straight month it's



## GRAPH OF THE WEEK: The car conundrum

For 20 years, U.S. auto sales and Canada's premium car sales have mirrored each other. In 2008, however, the importance of U.S. consumer spending to the Canadian job market is suggesting that Canadian unemployment may very well hit 12 per cent by the end of 2010.



## SIGNS OF THE TIMES



► Mortgages continue to plague North American consumers. The Mortgage Bankers Association reports that 11 per cent of U.S. house-hold mortgages are now overdue or in foreclosure, up from eight per cent a year ago. And the bad news for Obama administration's plan to use tax money to help struggling homeowners has already started. The Tennessee Republican party last week printed bumper stickers reading: "Back if you're paying my mortgage." Over 4,000 were sold in the first five days.

► Another sign of America's dire financial reality: the bus. The American Public Transportation Association reported that a cost because of economic turmoil and high gas prices drove a four per cent rise in the number of trips taken on public transit last year. At 2.7 billion trips, riding is now at its highest level in 21 years.

► Even in Western nations are being forced to consider constraints not to share up their crumbling economic institutions, bylaws, moving in the opposite direction. For four decades, Syria's economy was controlled and monitored, an economic capital led to most open for equity markets. But this week, the government opened the Damascus Securities Exchange. So far, few stocks are listed for trading, but it's seen as a key step in the liberalization of Syria's economy.

► Not all domestic manufacturers are struggling. The business of selling firearms is booming. Smith & Wesson reported a 40 per cent rise in fourth-quarter sales of handguns, and Remington-Union & Co. saw an 81 per cent jump in gun revenue. Well, that's reassuring.

"Sales at these levels imply horrific auto outlooks, while the U.S. auto industry supply have no reason, in their own, to ride through."

—Jason Hamilton, an economist with RBC's Monitor



"Any money we give to the auto industry must be a lifeline, not life support. That isn't realistic. But there has to be support of industry. And this needs to happen, and it needs to happen soon."

—U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi

**"There would be an economy before a GM liquidation and an economy after. In the latter, we'd be having this conversation with two cans and a string."**

—Erik Markle, an independent analyst in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"Although sales have already plunged to 14 year lows, our analysis suggests they have considerably more room to contract... Long-term changes in the way Americans drive will mean the good news for the auto industry is never coming back."

—Jeff Kautsky, chief economist, CIBC World Markets

"Expecting auto manufacturers' management to fix their own companies reminds one of the definition of insanity: the same people repeatedly doing the same things but expecting different results."

—Larry Karpman, a retired industry consultant, and advocate of temporarily outsourcing GM

## OVERDRAWN by Jason Logan



## THE WEEK AHEAD

**THURSDAY** U.S. retail sales for February will be revealed, with most economists predicting a 0.5 per cent decline. Consumer spending and discount chains seem to be stable, but sales of automobiles and luxury goods still appear weak.

**FRIDAY** Statistics Canada will report February employment results with analysts expecting the loss of another 50,000 jobs and rise in the unemployment rate to 7.4 per cent. If accepted, estimates are correct that it brings cumulative job losses to 141,000 since October 2007.

**MONDAY** U.S. industrial production for February. Analysts expect

# IN THIS CLASS, EVERYONE GETS A+

**A controversial scheme that's more common than universities admit**

**BY HAREN FINKEL** • At first glance, Derrin Rancourt is a self-proclaimed anarchist with a history of causing trouble. Over the past five years, the University of Ottawa professor has successfully used his employer's full-time salary to avoid teaching courses, claimed that the school's president is part of a continental Zionist conspiracy, taught a controversial screen course, and threatened the existence of climate change. But that's not why the university says it's firing him. In a move that's becoming increasingly popular in post-secondary education, Rancourt decided last year not to grade his students—something that has fueled a wide-ranging debate not only about his methods but also over academic freedom. And the outcome of the dismissal, which is pending, could change the balance of power between professors and university administrators across the country.

A native of North Bay, Ont., Rancourt has taught at the University of Ottawa for more than 30 years. Colleagues consider him highly regarded professor. Rancourt has published more than 100 scientific journal articles. But like a growing number of Canadian university professors, he also believes students learn best when they're not being graded. In 2001, he was denied permission to make his last fourth-year physics class "pass fail," so his students either get through or they don't. So he announced that everyone in the classroom was going to get an A+. According to Rancourt, his grades are only a means of exercising power in the classroom. "It's not about optimizing education," he says, "it's about obedience."

The school promptly suspended him, forced him out of his laboratory, and told his graduate students to find new supervisors. (Three of these students are now taking the university for taking away the professor who they say is the only person qualified to oversee their studies.) The university administrators also banned him from campus and, in a rare move involving a tenured professor, recommended his dismissal. Two weeks later, while hearing his monthly medical documentary

series at the school, Rancourt was arrested by police and charged with trespassing.

The university's treatment of Rancourt shocked David Noble, a York University professor who says he hasn't given grades for more than 15 years. For most of his teaching career he gave out straight A+—and, in 2006, the university prevailed on him to switch to pass-fail. For decades, he got letters from the university reminding him to "unofficially" grade. "I would usually just throw the letters away," Noble says. "Nothing ever happened." Based on decades of educational research, including some of his own as a graduate student, he says there's no doubt that grades are counterproductive.

In fact, the practice of not marking students—describing increasingly popular, says Carl Leggo, an education professor at the University of British Columbia. In recent years there has been some "compelling research" proving that students are more creative and more productive when grades are removed. Leggo says courses for UBC's bachelor of education degree, in addition to other courses at the university, are pass-fail for the simple reason that students learn better. "You can't run a class people feel is quite conservative, and they want to do things in formulaic, traditional ways," he says. "When the competition for grades and the tension around grades is removed, students actually start studying, researching and writing in more creative ways." (According to a 2006 study of medical students at the Mayo Medical School, pass-fail systems reduce stress levels and increase group cohesion when compared with students who were given grades on a five-point scale.)

Not only are undergraduate pass-fail courses becoming more common, but the Stanford, Calif. and Berkeley schools have all recently



## ONE-THIRD OF THE PROF'S COLLEAGUES HAVE SIGNED A PETITION OF COMPLAINT

removed regular final grading systems. Alverno College, a Catholic women's school in Milwaukee, Wis., hasn't used grades since 1973. Kathleen O'Brien, the school's senior vice president for academic affairs, says the system has been infinitely better for students' education, self-esteem and long-term projects. The school will produce grades for graduate school or scholarship applicants, but they are then promptly destroyed.

It's hard to think others, though, like appealing. The idea that a student in a science faculty could earn an A+ without demonstrating knowledge in anything to John Jones, associate dean of Simon Fraser University's faculty of applied sciences. "Our graduates are going to be going out and doing things that human lives depend on. It's very important that our grading reflects their abilities," says Jones. Plus, he adds, it wouldn't just be counterintuitive, it would be dangerous to the public. Marks are not necessarily the best way to judge the skills and talents of each student, he says, "but we can't build a system on washed grading."

Professor Gary Schuler agrees. He's been

an undergraduate adviser for aspiring medical engineers at the University of British Columbia for 10 years, and says the controversy around marks is an old one. In many cases, grades do impede learning, says Schuler. However, they are also the best and most effective way to evaluate students' skills and knowledge, he says. "This is a litigious profession where to walk, but don't let the car crash into the reality of the world."

Rancourt and his supporters have opened up another front in the debate, saying that the University of Ottawa's actions are such an attack on academic freedom in teaching methods. That argument was dismissed by the New York Times on Feb. 15. Its American education expert and law professor Stanley P. Rancourt, Phil Weiss, was trying "to turn social responsibility into a form of heroism under the banner of academic freedom" that the Canadian Association of University Teachers has nevertheless struck a compromise of inquiry to investigate the case. "Here's a renowned, full professor, one of the most respected physicists and active researchers at his university, who's being told he's not allowed to teach," says Jan Wark, executive director of the association. "This is an extraordinary situation. The complexity of the issues are so great that we didn't have to set up an independent committee of inquiry to investigate this mess."

Results from the group, which includes Jeffrey Holzman, one of the leading nurturing curriculum scholars in North America, was not expected before the end of 2009. But Noble says the real issues behind Rancourt's dismissal are clear: not just academic freedom but, he claims, which is raised after decades of teaching and assessment and provides relatively untested job security, are under duress. "This has nothing to do with grades," says Noble. "That's not why the university's

**'SERIAL REOPENING IT'S RANCOURT'S life will be decided later this month**

firing Derrin Rancourt. They want to see if they can get away with firing a tenured professor without cause. For their second meeting to elect Rancourt off the campus, so if he were a mistake who was running around giving everyone A+,'s assistant."

The University of Ottawa has kept relatively quiet about the case, issuing a press release only after it made headlines. The school's administration expressed concern that the candidacy of marks at the entire institution was being thrown into doubt, which would affect scholarships, admission to graduate programs and ultimately the reputation of both students and the school. The university also said a "significant non-legal faculty colleague had signed concerns" regarding Rancourt's conduct.

Ching confidentiality and legal obligations, the university has declined further comment. But nearly one-third of Rancourt's colleagues at the school have signed a petition of complaint against him. For many other professors, including Patrick Denette, associate professor of government at Washington's Georgetown University, Rancourt's actions

are nothing more than a blatant abuse of academic freedom. After reading Phil's article, he was outraged a professor would try to control students into a movement to undermine the institution and then claim it as an academic right. "It seems to me that what he is doing is, actually, violating, undermining academic freedom," says Denette, adding that he can't think of any other professors whom Rancourt's actions would be tolerated. "It seems fine to me if you want to denounce the institution, but doing that while using advantage of all of its resources seems to me to be a bit of a callous and ungrateful thing."

The final decision on Rancourt is expected from an executive committee of the university's board of governors later this month, after one final off-the-record mediation session with the administration on March 17. If he is fired, Leggo says the decision will definitely have a chilling effect on professors who want to try cutting-edge approaches in the classroom. "We have a sense of fear that we can't actually do what many of us feel which is to be contemporary professors," if Rancourt remains to keep his post, medical school professors can breathe a sigh of relief. ■

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**BLACKBOARD JUNGLE**

### SCHOOL ZONE: SLOW DOWN, WATCH FOR CROCS

A cartoonish crocodile in Patagonia, at the country's rugged Northern Territory, said to take a beat as crocodiles—well, at least a crocodile (as beaver) during the rainy season. But the bear's antics have been cancelled because of liability concerns. How to teach school, this is the life to walk through the forest. Despite the fact that these crocodiles were recently found and killed there. The territory's head of government has agreed to examine the problem.

DAVID RANACOURT/STANLEY SCHULER



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detect any particular national characteristics in his work. "There is not yet a Canadian literature," he wrote in 1841 near the end of his life. "None there similarly a Canadian business, nor any precisely Canadian way of being foreign." MacMillan begs to differ. "How wrong he was, of course. He was in the middle of creating both."

# A NATION IN A TOWN

BY MARGARET MACMILLAN

In 1842, Stephen Leacock published his master piece, *Sketches of a Little Town*. In it, the people of Orillia, Ont., study disguised as Mariposa, stuck in for all Canadians, and we were shown as if we really had discovered our propensity punctured, our hypocrisy shown up, our weakness mocked. We haven't stopped reading it since.

Leacock's Mariposa knows about the outside world even if the outside world does not know exactly about Mariposa. In small towns, says the narrator, people have less of time to read the newspaper cover to cover. In Jefferson Township's barbershop they talk about the future of China or the relations between the German Kaiser and his publisher. Some Mariposans go away to college; the local MP had two sons away in one year's ago and that makes him a man of learning. And the outside world from time to time, impinges on Mariposa. In the spring, the rough lumbermen, some of whom are local town boys, come down from the north and lie about drunk on the sidewalk outside the hotel. The discovery of minerals to the north causes great excitement. (Skodbury's) nickel and copper were found in the 1880s, struck at Cobalt in the 1900s, and gold was struck at Kirkland Lake in 1911 as Leacock was writing his sketches.) The mining boom meant big mine's savings and some of its more adventurous share. Some of its sons go to fight in the South African War, many more, although as we know it, will fight and die in the First World War.

Mariposa is not a specific time and a specific place. It could not be anywhere else but southern Ontario. Its people are of British stock, many of them descended from the Loyalists who fled the U.S. after the American Revolution. They are Protestant as far as we know. We scarcely hear about Catholics or



His wife, Lila, did drop him that there was a darker side to life under the surface in Mariposa

Irish immigrants. The two main churches are the Anglican and the Presbyterians. The Salvation Army is the only representative of a more emboldened sort of religion. Political affiliations are more important and interesting than religious ones. Most people in Mariposa, and this is true still in some parts of southern Ontario, are life-long Liberals or Conservatives. The Canadian novelist Guy Vanderhaeghe, who grew up in the West, said Leacock helped him to understand why his Ontario grandfather always voted for the Conservative party in Saskatchewan even though it had no hope of winning. "He followed this line all through his life, as if he knew that this line all through his life was better than any other's politics decided." Some Mariposans, though, will switch their votes if it is something as big as for them. The only thing you cannot do, says the narrator, is have no politics at all. Such people, the general opinion is, are up to something funny.

Leacock's Mariposa takes itself seriously (So does Orillia itself, its writers say continually). "Throughout there we can see anywhere in the world," in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1911, after whether Canada would have more or less trade with the United States, says Mariposa, Legation Mariposa, voice our relationship against. "That, in the view of the local, says the *British Empire*. And no one should think the narrator wrong, that Mariposa is a dull

place. The ritual of amusements, from the Mayor's Ball to the town band at the park, is simply dulling. On warm summer evenings the drunks are blown out in winter-soldier counts. "There is such a laughing and a calling as you never heard, and the girls are all in white and pink and cambrige blue, and the soda fountain is of white, marble with silver taps, and it makes and aqueduct, and Jim Elliot and his assistant wear white coats with red regiments in them, and it's just as gay as a gay. The foyer of the opera in Paris may be a day night, but I doubt if it can compare with the inside of Rick's drug store in Mariposa for real gaudy and joy of being."

As in all small towns, people tend to know all about one another. Everyone knows that Peter Pupkin, the bank teller, is courting Zena Pepperglitch, the judge's daughter. After all, he raises her as his cousin in the evening, and "for fear" they go on to the Prohibition Society, "which if you know Mariposa, you realize to be a solid sort of escape that ought to speak volumes." One of the few figures of mystery is the local keeper, Jack Smith, who, it was said, had started out in a cage in the lumber camp up north. Smith is huge and imposing, has that "holiness, inscrutable, unassailable, the face of the heaviest bear before sleep." Only the faithful Billy the clerk, known simply as Bill, knew the Napoleon and

the Barons of Mariposa, pulling his own chains and those of the town out of the fire (some say, as in the case of the Anglican church, literally). Through misery and devotion means, Smith uses his own liquor license and wins the election as the Conservative candidate. He salvages the Mariposa Bible when it risks. He leads the effort to keep the train from burning when the Anglican church goes up in flames (The fact that he was still carrying a can of kerosene toward the church the night of the fire is an odd story which as one believes is so admits to believing).

Leacock drops other hints that there is a darker side to life and more below the surface in Mariposa than first appears, as when he tells of Judge Pepperglitch's son, who had fought in South Africa, or how the barber, Jefferson Thorpe, loses his fortune. The widowed Reverend Driscoll, of the Anglican church, is a great comic figure as he lectures about to the Mayor's Union or the Infant Class.

He takes great pride in his gold medal for Greek, now 30 years ago, and is often seen sitting in his garden with a Greek vase. He cannot translate anything, he says, because the true

"And sometimes—when his head is very clear—as he sits there reading beneath the plum blossom he can hear them singing beyond, and his wife's voice."

In Mariposa, though, things usually turn out well. The town generally abides as the little town. There is no poverty and no crime. Disagreements over politics never result in permanent rifts. The drama and the disaster on a minor scale together, during the big election they were to take in as a separate Saturday. Peter Pupkin becomes a hero and wins 200 Pepperglitch. They live happily ever after in their "enriched" house with their "enriched" baby.

Just in Garrison Kellie does with Luke Walsgrove, Leacock is mocking Mariposa's foolish, its follies, and its frequent hypocrisy. He does so with affection and perhaps a certain regret that he cannot go back to the most innocent times of his youth. *Sketches* ends with a short afterword, this time seen from the perspective of the city

## THE AMUSEMENTS, FROM THE FIREMAN'S BALL TO THE TOWN BAND, ARE DAZZLING



AFTERNOON Leacock's spiritual descenders, MacMillan with Rick Mercer and Margaret Kellie

benary would be lost. But kindly, good Denis Denis who said if the growing child is his magnificent new death. "When it looks like nothing can be done to save the parish from bankruptcy, he struggles to compose his letter of resignation. While he is in the desk, he sees the glow of flames from the firework and falls forward with a stroke. All is ended in a sense, as it turns out the church carries a lot of insurance. Denis is not the saint, how over the town his garden reading Greek only because, he says, his head is so weak from

Did you not know, the narrator who he reads that there is a little town that is the same as the town every day for Mariposa? You know about it when you write the boy who had just arrived in the city, but as the town have passed and you have prospered, you have forgotten all about it. In that, you are like the other successful men you meet in the grand Mariposa Club. "Would you believe that I practically every one of them came from Mariposa once upon a time, and so there we're one of them that doesn't sometimes dream in the

dark past of the long evening here in the club, but some day he will go back and see the place." If you do go back, the narrator writes, you will find in the sense, but you will have changed.

Leacock always maintained that his town of Mariposa was completely fictional, but he took much from Orillia, which he had come to know well as he was growing up and which was the closest town to his summer home, Kellie's First World War, Orillia had some 50,000 inhabitants, Mariposa had the same (although its people always imagined they were under counted in a malicious plot to de-feminize) Orillia had two newspapers—the *News-Letter* and the *Recorder* and Times, Mariposa had one—the *Newspaper*. In Orillia, the town barber was Jeff Short, in Mariposa, he was Jeff Thorpe, in Jefferson Skelton, Goldfish Gingham is the successful under-clothes. "I have often heard them explain," says the narrator, "to associate with the living, remembering though they appear, to the only way to secure the custom of the dead." Horace Beghins, the real Orillia undertaker, said softly that he thought this made him sound a bit too preoccupied with business. Not all his practices in Orillia was so real. A lot of its greatest citizens never began Leacock, and his own mother scolded him for his caricature of Canon Croome, the real Anglican clergyman, who was much loved in town. Croome himself lived up to his reputation for headiness and apparently never knew Leacock's grandfather was a very harsh parent. Leacock described Leacock in easy or the town drunk, and it must be admitted that the gave them material to work on.

Robertson Davies believed that Leacock was so much by the local reaction that his development to an artist, at least in one direction, was halted. In *Interview*, *Sketches* has "the strong appearance of being the work of a man who would need a very strong town." And certainly there are in the book some of the elements of a novel: good stories, vivid characters, and strong settings. Leacock himself diagnosed, developing his potential as a novelist. "I can never characterize quite easily," he said after *Sketches* was published, "but I have no notion as to how to make things happen to them. Indeed I see no reason why anything should." There is, in a hard today not to be kind, as a very Canadian, white, under one of the spiritual successors of Rick Mercer or the Royal Canadian Air Force, it is both recognized, of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Madame Bovary*. ■

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Stephen Leacock by Margaret MacMillan. Copyright © Margaret MacMillan, 2009. Reprinted with permission of Penguin Group (Canada).

PHOTO: MARGARET MACMILLAN

REYNOLDS



# BIG SHOTS, BIGGER RIVALRY

**Crosby and Ovechkin dislike each other. That's good news.**

**BY COLIN CAMPBELL** • It's game day in the suddenly hockey mad city of Washington, and the Verizon Center has been transformed into a shrine to Alexander Ovechkin. Fans wearing his red, No. 8 Capitals jerseys pour through the gates by the thousands. Inside, his go-toed, map-headed likeness is every where, from the center-ice video screens to the life-size cut-out in the concourse. The 25-year-old Russian youngster has helped lift his team into the third spot in the Eastern Conference and already made hockey the sport to watch in the U.S. capital. This city can't get enough Ove.

But the Pittsburgh Penguins are in town on this Sunday afternoon, and there's this one big Capital city supporting the No. 1 with "Crosby Sucks!" on the back. Anti-Safety Crosby signs are pinned against the glass and waved in the stands, from the clever (like a sweater) "No Driving" sign to the crass ("Crosby is a douche"). It might surprise Capitals' hockey fans to know Crosby as the sweetest kid from Cole Harbour to see this kind of intense reaction, but there's a real rivalry here, and not university.

Washington and Pittsburgh have always had a strong hockey relationship—and Pittsburgh leading that upper hand. But with each team featuring one of the two greatest players in the game, it's gotten a much more serious, says Sam Gold, a Caps fan who rallies the crowd by blowing his away player's hair. This year, Washington, for a change, has had the better team and Caps fans insist Ove is the best player in the world. So why, they wonder, is Crosby still the face of the NHL? That's a question Ovechkin himself won't be asking. In this case, the dream isn't just in the stands. There are two players who clearly don't like each other.

But step away the hometown boosterism, and the question of "who's better?" is far less settled. That Ovechkin has been making such a strident noise only compounds the

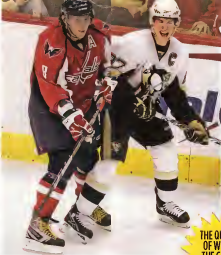
debate, says scouts, analysts and former coaches. Ask them who is tops today and you'll get a lot of personal bias and favoritism. Sure, Ovechkin has size and a dazzling look for goal-scoring, but Crosby is the one with the jaw-dropping playmaking ability. The only thing both players share in equal measure is an unmatched drive to win—and that has only stoked their rivalry, and their evident dislike for each other. For hockey, it couldn't be the best thing that's happened in decades.

Twenty years ago, the two greatest hockey players on earth were also two of the most hateable guys on skates. Wayne Gretzky was at the end of his second scoring year in Edmonton, while Pittsburgh's Mario Lemieux was beginning his year during northern of his own. But these were also two friends who were quick to toss a wit toward one another. "You never lie awake at night worrying about who's better because who does that get you?" Crosby said in 1995.

Things have changed. During a game late last month, sometime between today's migration to the ice when Crosby gave Ovechkin a frustrated shove into the Washington bench, Ovechkin responded with an arm around Crosby's head, wiping off his helmet, and ended things with a wave of dismissal as Crosby skated to the bench. By hockey standards, it was a minor skirmish—but between these two, it was like Muhammad Ali boxing Joe Frazier. In past game interviews, the duo are models of passive agreement. "I don't like it personally, but that's him," said Crosby, of Ovechkin's antics. "It was a game incident," Ovechkin said of the scuffle. "If he didn't like it, it's his problem."

The real surprise is that it took this long to bubble to the surface. Crosby has been on the duo since he joined the league in 2000. Unlike Gretzky and Lemieux, whose careers peaked a few years apart, Alex and Mike have been competing for the same Westerners from the go-go. Early on, it was Crosby who got much of the attention. Even before he'd surpassed NHLer, he had been awarded the status of the league. Gretzky himself declared Crosby "the Next One."

While Crosby hasn't put up Crosby-like



numbers, he hasn't disappointed either. His greatest skill is his uncanny knack for seeing the ice and anticipating how play will unfold—something he does as a game that is even faster than when the Great One played. Eddie Olczyk watched Crosby in his first two dozen games in the NHL. "The way he's able to drive people out and make plays through screens and through pines—he's an unbelievable player," he says.

Ovechkin, on the other hand, goes back to the ice like a home team. As of this week, Ovechkin has taken more than 420 shots in his first season. That's well over 100 more than the second-most prolific scorer—Crosby's Eric Staal. Ovechkin isn't just a capable player, he is hockey's equivalent of a machine gun. At six feet two, 210 lb., he's been compared to Mike Richard, or a higher-scoring version of Mark Messier. He's talented and fast, but also the type of wild gun in snow go through you as around you. Again, the numbers tell the tale. This year, he's already shot out over 100 shots, putting him seventh in the league.

Crosby, by comparison, is a snail-like

foot eleven, 180 lb., and his game is markedly less physical. But he can hold his own. "Crosby doesn't go around looking for the big hit, but he still has a physical edge to his game," says Doug MacLean, a former coach of the Florida Panthers and now an analyst at Sportsnet. His advantage comes back to his minimal leg strength, which makes him hard to knock down in an NHL line locker. "His extreme plays when you think he's down and out," he says.

Both players have racked up awards, from the Art Ross Trophy (for top-point center) to the Hart Trophy (for most valuable player). This year, they've been back and forth in several points scored. Ultimately, who you favor may say more about what you value in a player than it does about the players themselves. And there are bigger differences here than their skill sets alone.

Last January, the most memorable moment of the otherwise-quiet All-Star weekend came when Ovechkin doored a Tilly Hat, Candi

an flag and shadin during the shortest contest. His intent was to downplay justly that game couldn't help but wonder if maybe there was a hidden message. Ovechkin was hailed last game by a fellow Russian (and Pennsylvanian), Evgeny Malkin, and started his per se because by taking a big shot of Ovechkin—a product endorsed by Crosby—Steele wondered openly if it was a subtle jab at Crosby.

More likely it was just Ovechkin being Ovechkin. Mike Milbury, an analyst with HockeyNight in Canada, remembers last year calling out Ovechkin for playing "like a dog" in a game. Ovechkin answered back with an old but menacing retort. He called Milbury a cat. "He makes me nervous about trying to please anybody and generally what he is, is kind of playing," says Milbury. The dog may

**CAPS' MILBURY** wonders why Crosby (left) is the face of the NHL. Ovechkin (right) has already had 420 shots on goal



**THE QUESTION OF WHICH IS THE GREATER PLAYER IS FAR FROM SETTLED**

own style come through in his game as well. To the old school, some of his antics, like taking a slap against the glass after he scores, are dismissed. Joe Cherry took him to task last November for young fans, but what he makes him something. "It's almost as if he's a guy of this generation," adds Milbury.

Crosby, on the other hand, is more of a down-to-earth, often concerned in being too careful about his public persona. A few days after his reported downing of hockey, "Joe saw how much Ovechkin enjoys to play the game. If you don't see it, you're in the crowd. I still do," says Dennis MacIntyre, the director of scouting with the Los Angeles So-

cal Services, who has followed both players since they were young teenagers.

If Crosby has lost some of his size, it may have a lot to do with his ice and on-ice skills. Ovechkin plays with Alexander Semin and Nicklas Backstrom, two top young players who can help find him the puck. Crosby hasn't had as strong a supporting cast this year, even though he's teamed up with Malkin, the league's leading scorer. "If you're a great playmaker and you're not playing with finishers, nobody's gonna score," says Olczyk about Crosby's situation.

The recent addition of Bill Guerin could help turn things around. During last week's game, the then new captain and Crosby came out firing. In a wide open two-on-one with Guerin, he took a cross-ice pass and

skipped the puck into the net. Ovechkin, who was not so lucky. His shot was not going into the corner. For this game, at least, the advantage was Crosby's.

But this battle is far from over. With any luck, the two will continue to peak and ebb, and even double each other, for a long time yet. "The whole reason of the game is to beat the opposition. That's going to create more heated games and heated games that's why," says Milbury. Even Caps fans, for all their Crosby bashing, are without fault. "This is the Larry Bird versus Michael Jordan rivalry," hockey's "golden rule." For scoring and shot first reads, it's Crosby. On the back (and a less family-friendly message on the front). Surveying the crowd and the field, Crosby's leadership and the Verizon Center's odds, "It's good for the game." ■



**MOTHER OF ALL RAYS SUCCEEDS TO ANGLER**  
 Another angler hit Wayne successfully caught what is believed to be the biggest fish ever brought in with rod and reel in fresh water while helping with a tag-and-release program in the Helicon River in Thailand. Weighing in at a 350-lb. angler, it dragged me through the local and would have pulled me back if my line weren't cut. I got my first hit in 1998. After I was released, the angler was tagged, and he and 12 helpers returned it to the river.



# YOU, SIR, ARE NOTHING BUT A BANKER

In politics and in pop culture, money men are the new pariahs

**BY JONATHAN CATHEROUK** • Forget the black hats, these days the bad guys wear pin-striped suits. At stock games in Ireland, crowds are reacting to bad calls by labeling the ref "a banker," instead of the rhymer's word. The notorious King Rat was a ferocious moneylender in the British postman's tin-pot cinema. In the recent thriller *The Last Samurai*—big line "Everybody Dies"—Clive Owen's cop was on the trail of murderers, arms-dealing financiers. And a sequel to *Wall Street*, written recently panned Gordon Gekko still manipulating markets through a proxy, is being rushed into production.

Banking has proved that the global economic meltdown has also fixed the villain-of-the-week will be available next fall, when an unnamed ABC sitcom, featuring Kelley Grammer as a fiscal czar whose shuffling circumstances force him to become a down-on-his-knees, makes its debut. After all, no one plays a penguin as quite like the former *Dr. Frasier Crane*.

Booming—or better still, laughing—at the plutocrats who have left investors rich and retirement savings wringing losses might be the only relief consumers get. President

Barack Obama has become adept at snuffing public anger over the \$16 billion in bonuses paid to bailout-bank bankers in 2008, but there is little he can do beyond promising it won't happen again. "This time, CEOs won't be able to use taxpayer money to pad their paychecks at bay fixer-despise-or-disgrace on a private jet," he told Congress. In the U.K., the anger, and governments' inaptitudes, is almost identical. The story of the former CEO of the Royal Bank of Scotland—now 95 per cent taxpayer-owned—and his \$3.6 million-a-year pension, has been dominating headlines. Sir Fred Goodwin led his bank to the biggest losses in British history, but so the board let him take "early retirement," rather than firing him, he appears entitled to his compensation. Although Parliament is considering revoking his livelihood.

The public anger—and political hot-air—being directed at bankers is hardly a new phenomenon, says Michael Kazan, a U.S. history

professor at Georgetown University in Washington. "In America, there's always been a general suspicion of the financial industry," he says. "It's okay to make money if you sell us your devices and make something—automobiles, bridges. Just not if you profit from other people's misery." The emergence of Wall Street as a financial center since then a century ago gives the same old world a common new place to target their rage during bad times. J.P. Morgan, the titan-of-the-century financier, twice saved the U.S. economy from financial ruin. But in his time he was an object of popular ridicule, says Kazan, with newspaper caricatures regularly depicting his prominent nose as a nugget of gold.

In Canada, the tension between bankers and the public has always been slightly different, says Duncan McDowall, a financial historian at Calton University. After years to political movements during downturns, they have also been recognized as nation-builders during boom times. The less tumultuous relationship is probably due to tighter government regulation—no domestic bank has failed in over a century—although the respect will always be grudging. "In a pejorative way the current crisis has improved the image of Canadian bankers," says McDowall, pointing to the relative respect of our major institutions. "But I don't think there's anyone going so far as putting them on 'Tribune'."

The Canadian Bankers Association says its research shows the vast majority of Canadians have a "favorable" impression of banks (although the survey didn't address attitudes toward the people who run them). But access was available to discuss the findings.

In the Great Recession, the biggest difference may be in how the victims see themselves. The attacks center around what banks have done to "consumers," rather than "workers," or other class distinctions, Kazan points out. Perhaps our perception of the industry are changing. In Frank Capra's classic *It's a Wonderful Life*, the commercial banker played by Lionel Barrymore was the bad, and James Stewart's plucky savings and loans operator the hero. "Some people have argued that following Stewart's example is what led to the current crisis," says Kazan. "He gave people heaven with very little money down." ■



## GERMANY: SLID EVENT A WOK ON THE WILD SIDE

The annual late-winter sport of riding Chinese coaling woks on a bobbed track is about to begin. Since 2005, German celebrities such as former Playboy model Christina Grotz have roared down a track at speeds of up to 100 km/h in modified one- and two-man woks, wearing soup ladles on their feet to steer. Two years ago a singer from the band Donkey was seriously injured during a race, leading to calls for weight limits of 150 kg in one-man woks.

PHOTO BY



# NEWSMAKERS

★ ENTERTAINMENT EDITION ★

The season's winners and whiners, stars, sirens and saints

Section by Dennis Farnsworth,  
Entertainment Weekly  
& Patrick Finkbeiner

# ARRIVALS

## SLUMDOG ACTORS

Dev Patel, Florida Panto, and the rest of the young cast of *Slumdog Millionaire*—the winner of this year's Oscar for Best Picture—became Hollywood darlings overnight. Patel, who appeared on the *Match* cover of *Vogue* India, has already signed on to star in Woody Allen's next film. The families of two of the younger actors, Rishita Altamash Azharia (16), ages 9 and 10, were promoted new homes by the local housing authority for bringing honour to their country—though the kids have had other problems, going from the glitz of Oscar night back to the real stars.

## ARETHA'S HAT

Aretha Franklin's long-sleeved Day hat—a US\$500 grey wool creation finished with an intricate bow and trimmed with Swarovski crystals—has become a one-hit wonder for Detroit-based designer Luka Song. He has fielded over 3,000 requests for replicas, and online, fans have photoshopped "Aretha's hat" onto everyone from Dick Cheney to Gandhi to the Statue of Liberty. The designer has acquired the hat for his personal collection, but Franklin says she's still thinking it over.

## STARBUCKS INSTANT COFFEE

Now that the 54 machos to have been squeezed out of most people's budgets, Starbucks is hoping to keep its customers satisfied with a new 11-minute coffee that comes in a packet and you mix yourself. Early reviews also mixed.

## SENATORS DUFFY AND WALLIN

Two of Canada's best-known broadcasters, Mike Duffy of CTV and Pamela Wallin, for

DEMETRI MARTIN: Clockwise from top left, Pamela Wallin, Mike Duffy, Jimmy Fallon, Kara Danvers, Adria Taub, J. Henson, Dev Patel and Florida Panto



mostly of CTV and CBC, were appointed to the Senate from P.C. and Saskatchewan respectively. Both senators were criticized for not being legitimate residents of the province they ostensibly represent. Wallin and Duffy were quick to point out they still have property in the provinces in question, but many locals remain unpersuaded.

## KARA DISGUARDI

The addition of a new judge, soap writer Kara Disguardi, for the eighth season of *Paula's American Idol* generated so far much-needed drama for the late-fading cultural institution. Paula Abdul, Disguardi's former roommate, told *ABC* magazine the hire was a mistake. Disguardi struck back on *Access Hollywood*, saying it was too bad Paula didn't let her do her hair. It's on.

## JASON WU

The 35-year-old Manhattan-based designer was once on *Project Runway*. Michelle Obama wore one of his creations—a white, one-shoulder top for gown-to-the-husband's wrap-and-hail. "We were at home watching the fashionista on TV and seeing Michelle's photo when he found out she had selected his dress. 'I was over the moon,'" he told the *New York Times*. "I didn't realize it was my time yet."

## DEMETRI MARTIN

Previously a "youth correspondent" on *The Daily Show*, Demetri Martin is getting ready soon for his new Comedy Central show, *Insignificant Things* with Demetri Martin, in which the comedian, most ingeniously billed as 15-year-old comedian friend, has his own quirky observations on everyday things. For instance, how do you make yourself a person over less powerful? Add 25 before his name. Example: DJ Abraham Lincoln.

## ADELE

Twenty-year-old British pop singer Adele—known for her raw R&B sound—won two Grammy Awards for her debut album, 19, including a win for best new artist, for which she beat out the unimpressive

musical duo the James Bay duo—was a triumph of talent over luck in the music industry.

## KINDLE 2

Amazon's covered reading device, the Kindle, is still not available in Canada, but south of the border, its first iteration, Kindle 2, has already landed. The second-generation device, which costs US\$199, can hold over 1,000 books, as well as a magazine, and boasts a new "read to me" feature that turns it into something like an iPod. Oprah Winfrey declared herself one of the Kindle's biggest fans, which means the device would make as much sense as it would still buy it.

## THE BERNIE MADOFF BERMIE LIBRARY

Bernie Madoff's alleged Ponzi scheme may have sapped the hopes and bank accounts of thousands of investors, but his story is worth something in the publishing world. Already, there are eight Madoff books in the works, including *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* by business reporter Erin Aveland, who has the distinction of having publicly questioned Madoff's tactics as far back as 2001.

## PSYCHEDELICA

Scientists at the University of Washington believe they have identified a new species of fat used by both men and women colored skin stripes. They're dubbed it *thymoplythyr* popudol, or *H. pygidialis*. The fat is unique for its flattened, forward-facing eyes, big blue fins and its bizarre swimming technique, described as a sort of hop—"like a giant rubber ball bouncing left and right." Also its personality, which has been described as "secretive."

## TAYLOR SWIFT

At the end of February, Taylor Swift's sophomore album *Fearless* topped the Billboard charts for 10 consecutive weeks. It probably didn't hurt that the 19-year-old reigning "queen of country pop" is also the former girlfriend

of just one of the nine stars (the other nine are the stars of the *Twilight* series) who posed above her in a movie advertisement. "She's such a lot of records," he said. "That's love for you."

## 'FRINGE'

Canada's Joshua Jackson stars in the latest as a TV drama series to combine crime-solving and quirky mind-tricks. *Fringe* is about a Boston-based FBI team that specializes in "fringe science"—telepathy, invisibility, shape-shifting, and the like—and investigates interpersonal phenomena around the world. Finally, a new home for displaced *X-Files* geeks.

## JIMMY FALLON

On March 3, the former *Saturday Night Live* star took over as *Conan O'Brien*'s host of *Late Night*, to mixed reviews. The show's start date, Fall's version of the show is designed to be more high-tech and "Internet-friendly." The staff will include three full-time bloggers and on his desk will be a computer, instead of just the same old analog pencil and paper. Fallon says his show will also cover the latest in high-tech gadgets. Because nothing says low-tech entertainment like gadgets.

## TARA J. P. HENSON

Best Supporting Actress Oscar nominee Taryn P. Henson, 35, made the show in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, in which she played Queenie, Benjamin's dying adoptive mother. Bird Pitt was widely lauded for his physical transformation in the film, but when it came to plain old-fashioned acting, Henson was the one who did the most special effects.

## SHINN...TATTOO

First the "Shibb" "tattoo" named up-close the inside of Rihanna's index finger, captured in numerous photos of the singer holding her finger to her lips. Then British pop star Lily Allen and Leland Sklar got into the game as another partner in L.A. Are they trying to tell us something? —Lance George

# THE WHITE ALBUM



**T**he blizzard began with Michelle Obama's creamy Jason Wu confection that completed a top-of-the-wedding-cake tableau with the tuxedoed new President and continued, days later, with Anne Hathaway's Gossain glam at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. At Washington balls and on Hollywood red carpets, white is hotter than red, fresher than black. And for good reason: the luxuriously engineered hue assures the showstopping entrance enjoyed by brides on their big day. Plus, no shade better shows off every hour logged with the trainer—especially when it's as slinky as the beaded Valentino that Jennifer Aniston wore to the Oscars, which, at five kilos, itself provided a workout. White demands and rewards impeccable craftsmanship, as illustrated by Maria Yanez's amazing homage to New York's Chrysler Building, and it's the brand new armor to doom and gloom. Like Penelope Cruz brandishing her Oscar, it shouts "This is my big day"—even when everyone else is wearing it. —Anna Koppelman

**MAKING AN ENTRANCE:** (From left) Michelle Obama in dress by Jason Wu; Penelope Cruz in vintage Pierre Balmain; Halle Berry in L. Simon Scott dress; Annette Bening in dress by Elie Saab; Halle Berry in Versace; Anne Hathaway in Armani Privé; Jennifer Aniston in Valentino; Eva Mendes in Dior

(CUTTY BUSTERS)

# MOTHERS

After Michelle Obama had 200 health-care proposals during the campaign, but Barack's more policy work-market advice too.

# FIRST LADIES

Michelle Obama's family dream is to be a fashion icon. Inspired by her mother, she is now a fashion icon. Obama's family dream is to be a fashion icon. Inspired by her mother, she is now a fashion icon.



# DOMESTICATED ANIMALS

Harpers Allen, 24, lives in a house in the suburbs. She is a domesticated animal. She is a domesticated animal.



# LITERARY ASPIRATIONS

Barack Obama is a literary aspirant. He is a literary aspirant. He is a literary aspirant.



# FAMILY FACEOFF

The Washington newsmen take on the Obama old-timers  
—Anne O'Harey



# PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Stephen Spielberg and his wife are a public display of affection. They are a public display of affection. They are a public display of affection.



# PUBLIC SERVICE

In constructive public service, Obama points from the White House. He is a public service. He is a public service.



# RECREATION

Obama's family is a recreation. They are a recreation. They are a recreation.



# EDUCATION

Obama's family is an education. They are an education. They are an education.



# BEYONCÉ VS. RYAN JAMES

First Beyoncé played it. It is a legend. James is the movie. Beyoncé is the movie. Beyoncé is the movie.

# SHEPARD FAIRY VS. AP

Last year, Fairy picked up an Associated Press photo of Barack Obama and named it into the "hope" poster, the most famous image of the presidential race. This year, AP struck back, claiming Fairy violated copyright by pasting Obama's red and blue to it. If the news service wins, it will make it virtually impossible to have a work of art on an existing photograph. And if Fairy wins, might he face a lawsuit from Obama for violating copyrights on the concept of "hope"?

# CANADA GEESE VS. 'SULLY' BULLENBERGER

After the super-bus pilot man aged to land his plane safely in the Hudson River, experts examined the jetliner and found the remains of Canada geese, suggesting that owners of Canadian birds might have been responsible for the crash. It gives new meaning to the term "diverted plane."

# STEPHEN KING VS. TWILIGHT SERIES

The public horror writer doesn't appreciate the new vibrant, unlikable vampires of Stephen Meyer's bestselling Twilight series. King disagrees that Meyer "can't write worth a darn" and compared her to another popular but bad writer, F. Scott Fitzgerald. King's response: "Meyer's lessons of teenage girl love were: romance and passion, not horror. Nobody needs to say that the comparison was unfair to Perry Mason."



Beyoncé and Ryan James. Obama's red and blue. Fairy's hope poster.

# FEUDS



**WINNIEPESIA VS. OTTAWA**  
In what some call a "soul war," the two cities spent the summer fighting over who had the longer tradition of drinking. While Ottawa's Wolves won, the city's Wolves won the official record. Winnipeg got the Guinness World Record book to confirm that its Wolves won the title.

# LILY ALLEN VS. PEREZ HILTON

There used to be such a peaceful place, and then these two showed up. The pop singer and the gossip blogger took their long-standing feud to the popular message website, where Allen posted such one-liners as, "God, you're like a cockroach with a gun" and called it a "funny, bitter old queen." At less than a year, the feud has become a popular topic for these two in person.

# HILARY DUFF VS. RAYE DUNAWAY

When the former Disney Channel star got cast in the remake of *Beach House*, Dunaway, who starred in the 1967 classic, remarked, "Couldn't they have cast a real actress?" Duff replied that most actresses don't know who Dunaway is and added, "I might be dead if I looked like that now, too." The only way for Dunaway to get her revenge would be to sue in a number of states. But Duff had better watch out: anyone who's seen *Memorabilia* knows the Disney Channel star has her revenge on her, better watch out.

# STEVE COOGAN VS. COURTNEY LOVE

The British comic and former Love Live host was asked about the actress's *The Last Days of Greg Heist*. He put two fingers in his mouth and replied, "It had a gun right now I would put it in my mouth," a reference to the suicide of Love's husband, Nicolas. Coogan is in trouble with angry *Nirvana* fans who don't like him making light of their hero's death. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot. —James J. Wines



**WINGS** Kate Winslet (clockwise from left), Sam the Bull, 11-year-old musician Michiko Lagerberg, Danny Boyle with *Sliver* A.S. the Winner, Robert Plant and Alison Krauss, Christina Rosendahl



# WINNERS

## KATE WINSLET

This year Kate put the "win" in Winslet: best actress and best supporting actress at the Golden Globes, best supporting actress at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, and after an enormous win, a best Actress Oscar for her performance in *The Reader*. She was also named one of the best dressed actresses by not carpet watch—surviving her bludge and blue Yves Saint Laurent gown into yet another stunning victory.

## MCDONALD'S

Companies everywhere may be

curing the recession, but McDonald's is losing it. People are flocking to the golden arches for cheap and filling value meals as prior restaurant outpost at each. Sales declined by 2.1 per cent in January. Quarter President most analysts' estimate.

## GANNY BOYLE

Standing by the window and ended up going straight to video in North America, before the search light got involved. It went on to become a runaway hit, winning Best Picture at the Oscars and snagging Boyle a hefty gold coin

for Best Director. Nailed for an indie director previously best known for horror flicks like *28 Days Later* and the lovely heroin addict of *Deadheading*.

## JORMA HOGEBACKA

What a guy. After winning \$14.8 million in *Lotto 6/49* in January, he traded down the Tim Lincecum winners who served him double for years in St. Catharines, Ont., to make good on a promise to share his bounty. Galt got a certified cheque for \$10,000 inscribed with the words "I love a nice day."

## PLACIDO DOMINGO

As if the admission of lapses of opera fans wasn't enough, the soprano at the Florida Domingo has just won the biggest prize in classical music history, with a cool \$26.6 million. It was the inaugural awarding of the new Ringo Nelson Prize, made after the legendary Swedish soprano, it's said, was picked Domingo personally to win the dose prize before the deal in 2005.

## EVA MENDES

That Miami-born 14-year-old actress was best known for her role

in *2 Fast 2 Furious*, *Itachi and Ghost Rider* (and her famous quote with her partner for PETA). Now she has another angle in her eye. *Adult* magazine, the largest online men's magazine, recently voted her number one in the annual ranking of the Top 99 Most Desirable Women.

## MICHELITO LAGRAVERE

He's only 11 years old, but this young bullfighter is a man of letters. In January, Lagraverre was elected an amazing school leader during a bullfight in Mexico to claim a controversial place in history and, he hoped, an entry in *Guinness World Records*. Unfortunately, Guinness didn't share his love for blood, rejecting his claim because it does "not accept records based on the killing or harming of animals."

## CRISTIANO RONALDO

He's a winner on the field—but maybe not on the road. In January, FIFA named Ronaldo as World Player of the Year, choosing him over Liverpool's Fernando Torres and Barcelona's Lionel Messi. The Man of United watercooler second just days after crashing up his \$150,000 Ferrari 199 CTR in a tunnel underneath Manchester Airport. He walked away unhurt, but the airport charged him \$15,000 for damages.

## ROBERT PLANT AND ALISON KRAUSS

It was strange enough that Plant, the 60-year-old former Led Zepplin vocalist, and Krauss, a 37-year-old bluegrass-country singer, teamed up to produce the hit album *Antarctica*. Stranger

will that the unlikely pair went to the 51st annual Grammy Awards in early February, winning five Grammys in total and beating out Coldplay and Radiohead to win album of the year.

## KEVIN JAMES

Until recently, James's biggest claim to fame was playing Doug Flutie on the TV sitcom *The X-Files*. Now the world knows—and respects—him as the star of Paul Haggis' *Millions*, the highest grossing film of 2009 to date, with more than US\$129 million in box-office receipts.

## SAM THE MOALA

The heartwarming video of "Sam" the lioness gingerly approaching firefighter David Fire on Swedish paws for a drink from his water bottle was just what America

needed as it tried to cope with the deadly budapest that swept the south-east last month. The lioness had revealed that Sam was saved during a preventive bush-busting operation a week earlier, but both firefighter and lioness are still being treated as heroes.

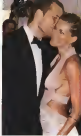
## PAT GUINN

He never did deliver the Stanley Cup that Toronto Maple Leafs coveted for so long, but Quinn obviously has what it takes to be a winner. His coaching skills alone this year as he quickly pulled together a promising junior hockey team for Canada, then helped it charge undefeated through the world championship to snag Canada's fifth consecutive gold, meaning Sweden 5-1 in the final.

—Drew MacLean

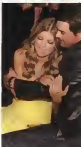


# MERGERS



CARRIE UNDERWOOD  
AND MIKE FISHER

The blond country star, famous for her ballad about two young boy friends seems to have found a local catch—and he plays guitar for the Owens Sisters. Keep an eye on your "souped up four wheel drive," Ms. Fuller. She's loyal with a set of car keys.

H.L.A. AND  
BENJAMIN BREWER

Consider this a merger and an acquisition. The Sri Lankan hipster and her beau—author to the *Broadman* fortune—welcomed their first child, a baby boy. Next up: wedding vows. And maybe a shot of Bezaunt's whiskey.

LARA LAVI AND  
DEATH ROW RECORDS

The Canadian lawyer and self-proclaimed "jewish soccer mom" emerged from anonymity to submit the winning bid—US\$18 million—for what was left of the bankrupt hip-hop label. Her company, Wildstyle Entertainment Group, now owns exclusive rights to classics from Tupac Shakur, Dr. Dre and Sade's Dog



**MADONNA AND JESUS**  
Jesus Leo, 21, is The queen of pop-mach her Brazilian boy-toy in a photo-shoot in Rio. The chosen underwear model is 21, which, if you're keeping count, makes her 18 years younger than her new musical pal.

## BOB DYLAN AND COMMERCIALISM

The ultra-cool crooner has turned into quite the sellout. Some of his most famous songs—*Billie Jean*, *Smiles on the Wind*, *Former Years*, and *I Wanna Dance with Somebody*—have been relegated to cheap advertising jingles, fogging everything from a British department store to GrubHub beer. The songs they are a-changin'!

GENE AND MAJER  
RODENSENBY

Two decades after the creator of *Star Trek* left this world for no other, the sci-fi legend will be reunited with his beloved wife—in outer space. When Majel died of leukemia in December, the couple's



IRANIAN SOCCER  
PLAYERS AND IRANIAN  
SOCCER PLAYERS

It was a short partnership. As soon as the mollusks found out there were tears played a female moan in a "bawdy" colorless game, persistence was swift and deep. A coach and two managers were suspended and fined for allowing unpaired men and women to mingle, and the site of the world was renamed, yet again, why Iran is so backward. The boys, by the way, won 7-3.



outside to the community

**FERGIE AND JOSH DUHAMEL**  
Speaking of wedding gowns, the Black Eyed Peas' front woman had her "lovely lady lamps" all dressed in white as she walked down the aisle toward her husband-to-be, Fergalicious!



**PINK AND CAREY HART**  
Nothing says "it's over" like post-coital coiffage. Pink's coiffage is in hand—chopping down a tice that has your name engraved on the bark. But the female rock ringer for coiffage video stunts was all in good fun, and the former couple is reportedly on the mend. A message, if you will. —*Michael Friedman*

## SAVING FACE

We're noticing a cultural divide over cosmetics revealing apparently linked to deep-rooted self-protection on either side of the pond. While the Yanks seek to compete in a youth-obsessed market, the Brits realize the character roles for which they're famous will require bettering their actually harrow



Helen Mirren & Goldie Hawn

64





## BLOND HAIR DYE

**+200%**

Can you think of a cheaper thrill? Millions of women are beating the recession blues with a sexy new blond dye job that costs less than a cup of coffee. Superheroes are reporting sales increases of up to 200 per cent in dye-at-home kits, while U.K. celebrity hairdresser Andrew Barton has produced it as an official "gold rush".



## UGG SALES

**+57%**

In the luxury shoe sales are plunging, sales of these sheepskin boots have shot up by 57 per cent last year. It's not just Kims and Kardashians going around town. Experts say slits to outside good, mostly worth it to

## CSIS APPLICANTS

Applicants to spy agencies worldwide have been on the rise since 9/11 and aren't slowing down. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service once had trouble attracting decent applicants. Over the past two years it had over 6,000 applications for the jobs as intelligence officers.

## 2010 OLYMPIC SECURITY BUDGET

**+400%**

Even a mission, safety doesn't come cheap. The U.S. government had pegged security costs for the Vancouver 2010 Games at \$775 million. Now it's saying security will cost about \$900 million—more than double the original. Peter Van Loon, the federal minister in charge of Olympic security, said simply "Our approach has not been to set a budget and then deliver security for the budget." See more.

## ANTIDEPRESSANTS

Close to one in 10 Americans is now taking an antidepressant, with women taking them at roughly twice the rate of men. Some say it's not to see at least one growth and many in tough times—others just feel it's depressing.



## LAWN CARE WORKERS

**+1%** Residents of Greenwich, Conn.—also known as "the hedge fund capital"—have recently been sighted offering the lowest rates for lawn care services. Will Stormy beaker, because he received "no bonus and no raise last year." He said only offers "premium services," but offers to die if he has less than a regular landscaper.

# RECESSION MATH

## BANK CEO PAY

**-65%**

TD Bank CEO Ed Clark will earn just \$10 million for 2009, after doubling \$15 million in 2008. Bank of Montreal head Bill Davis will get just \$14 million, rather than \$6 million. As a group, Canada's big bank CEOs have lost 65 to 69 per cent of their pay—but that's not all. Citigroup's Vikram Puri, who has cut his salary to \$1



## MALE BIRTHS

A recent study by economist Ralph Costello, a professor at the University of California, found that when times get tough, women have fewer children. Researchers speculate that it's because pregnant women under stress have more premature babies, and male fetuses are more likely to be born prematurely, so fewer of them survive.

## HYBRID CAR SALES

**-32%**

Last year, GM vice chairman Bob Lutz said the worst thing that could happen after the Big Three announced their future plans was that hybrid cars would be a smaller plunger in gas prices. That's exactly what happened. January figures show that U.S. hybrid sales have plunged by 32 per cent in a year.



## SHARK ATTACKS

**-17%**

The sharks are still there, but thanks to a big drop in beach vacations, the number of shark attacks worldwide dropped from 2007 to 2008 by 17 per cent—the lowest level in five years, according to a new study from the University of Florida.

## DEATH SENTENCES

**-60%**

Good news for death row. One side effect of the U.S. recession is a sharp fall in death sentences—down an average 60 per cent from 1998. Maryland, Missouri and New Mexico have dropped capital punishment altogether, not for moral reasons, but because capital cases take longer to prosecute and involve more lawyers. An execution cost at least 70 per cent more than keeping a convict in prison. —Chloe M. Ford

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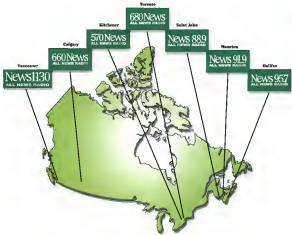
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## THE USUAL SUSPECT: MOM

*Motherhood is no trial this year, as mothers—famous and infamous, single and married, with one child or 16—come under intense scrutiny. And everyone has an opinion.* —Lianne George



Nadya Suleman  
throm. left; Rachida Dati;  
Salma Hayek; Candace  
Parker; M.I.A.

### NADYA SULEMAN

On Jan. 26, the single, unemployed psychology student gave birth to octuplets. Waiting at home were her other six children and her long-suffering mother, who faces US\$12,000 in delinquent mortgage payments. "I do believe wholeheartedly that God will provide in his own way," she said. "I need to know that my degree will help."

### RACHIDA DATI

France's glamorous publicist married twice, had five kids after giving birth, leading some to call her "the ultimate superwoman," and others to divide her for not taking maternity leave. Within weeks, Dati, who is single, Muslim and 45, was freed by Nicolas Sarkozy's administration for mysterious reasons.

Of motherhood she says, "I've been deeply moved by it."

### CANDACE PARKER

The 24-year-old WNBA superstar earned the ire of fans when she announced her first pregnancy. Parker is married and plans to return to the game, but fans are calling her out online for leaving the team down. "My whole career has been trying to please people in basketball," she said. "Now I'm trying to please myself. For me, family has always come first."

### RACHA PALIN

The teenage daughter of Gov. Sarah Palin gave birth to a boy in December. In her first interview as a mom, Palin, who is engaged to the baby's father, encouraged teens to practice abstinence but said that assuring they will be "not realistic at all."

and her husband, Jaggi, via a translator. "It's not like she woke up and wanted a baby at 50."

### SALMA HAYEK

On speed-dial tip to Stars Line, the shapely star, who is usually known as a first-time mother at 41, married, inspired and scandalized the world by breastfeeding an undernourished infant on camera. "I actually think my baby would be very proud to share her milk," Hayek said.

### BRISTOL PALIN

The teenage daughter of Gov. Sarah Palin gave birth to a boy in December. In her first interview as a mom, Palin, who is engaged to the baby's father, encouraged teens to practice abstinence but said that assuring they will be "not realistic at all."

### CHANTELLE STEADMAN

The 24-year-old Brit gave birth to a child believed to have been fathered by a 31-year-old named Nicky Patten—until a handful of other boys came forward in potential dad. She says she and Nicky are doing a good job as far, calling London's *Daily Mail*, "He made the first book and then we took it in turns. We didn't need any help from mums."

### M.I.A.

On Grammy night, the British sensation emerged on stage with two kids in tow, an 11-month-old and a 2-year-old, to perform a song called "Swagga Like Us." "I would totally go on one," she wrote on her blog. "I've been home instead. Lucky I did! Cos my early-stage labour kicked in around 2 a.m." ■



## WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE

The Oscar-winning filmmaker told *America's Funniest Home Videos* that he's still excited, and for people all over the world saying "Is that your final answer?" again. ABC is even talking of bringing back its once-popular version with Regis Philbin, which should be enough to kill off this comeback before it really gets started.

## BOB SAGET

The former *Full House* star has spent most of the past decade modeling his fringe as a sitcom dad, but now he's carving out a brand new career as...a sitcom dad. He's the star of *Barney's Version*, an almost dead sitcom the ABC picked up, desperate for family-oriented sitcoms in the fall. Philbin tradition. Seventy-three had Saget said about family sitcoms is now inexperienced he's been being a sitcom dad.

## JENNIFER HUDSON

The *Dresses* Oscar winner, whose mother, brother and nephew were murdered last year, returned to work with a performance of the Star-Spangled Banner at this year's Super Bowl. Soon afterward, she won a Grammy for best R & B album, scheduled a comeback tour, and appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, where she said she was "in a very good place." Even the fact that she recently renamed her dog "Oscar." "Grammy" and "Oscar" just seem sweet.

## PRINCESS LEIA'S SPACE BIKINI

In February, the new movie about Star Wars fans who just can't wait to see the princess of *The Phantom Menace*, Kristin Bell (voice as Leia) won the clappy double award originally won by Carrie Fisher as queen of the Jedi. This will be the best week of appearance by the multi-talented Bell: once in *Hot Friends*, and it may cause confusion in many fanboys, who'd wonder if they should know the outfit more than they love *The Phantom Menace*.

# COMEBACKS



THEY'RE BACK: Leslie's *ER*, Regis, Bob Saget, Jennifer Hudson, Kelly Clarkson, Cheech and Chong, George, and 'Isabel' on *Southwest*



## BATHURST HIGH'S BASKETBALL TEAM

In 2006, a car crash killed seven members of the basketball team of this high school in Bathurst, N.J. A little over a year later, the team won the provincial championship. The MVP of the game, Brad Arsenault, was one of the survivors of the crash. After the game, he turned down media requests, not wanting to cheapen the tragedy by making it the subject of press interviews.

## KELLY CLARKSON

The first *American Idol* winner pumped to the top of the Billboard charts with her new single *I'm a Survivor*. She's back on the radio, and she's back on the radio.

last album, *My December*. But then she blew the whole thing by saying that it's not about the car crash, she's just a woman who's a lesbian. Her friend Clay Aiken could tell her that's no way to stage a comeback.

## BANK NATIONALIZATION

When once *Ayn Rand* fan Ayn Rand was saying it might be necessary for the government to take over failing banks, you know the idea has gone mainstream. Everyone from liberal economist Paul Krugman to conservative Sen. Lindsey Graham has been calling for the nationalization of banks.

tion, you keep insisting they have no plan. But then they say they have a plan. But then they say they have a plan. But then they say they have a plan.

## CHEECH & CHONG

America's favorite comedy team of (vegan) potheads has finally reunited for the first time since the two broke up in 1995. The reunion was kicked off with an *On the Border* tour last year, and has led to an extended concert schedule, a recent film, and lots of marijuana smoke. The pair had no problem getting back into their old groove; they told the *New York Times* they practiced by looking up their old routines on YouTube. So when you pay to see them

live, you're seeing them imitating a routine you could perhaps get for free online.

## GEORGE CLOONEY

Through his new *Levi's* short movie star and activist, he's not looking to return to the hospital that made him a star. Clooney will make guest appearances in the current and final season of *ER*, reprising his role as the formerly hapless, now-kind-of-middle-aged doctor Doug Ross. He has no plans to repeat his role as the local handyman in any upcoming run-ins of *The Nanny* of *Life*.

## GEORGE RAHWANSKI

He was forced to resign as Canada's privacy commissioner in

2007 after being accused of abusing his expense accounts to the tune of \$100,000. But in February, Rahwanski was found not guilty of fraud, with a judge declaring that filing of a lawsuit for expenses was "imprudent and civil" but not necessarily illegal. Now he's free, but his story provides a cautionary tale to anyone who dreams of using an expense account so freely as they do on *Mad Men*.

## BILL HICKS

This comedian has been dead for 15 years, but that didn't stop him from being the special guest on an episode of *Late Night With David Letterman*. The host, who unfortunately ceased use of

Hicks' routines back in 1995, apologized to the late comic's sons and showed the original routine in full. Now the world will no longer be denied the raw truth of Hicks' jokes about Billy Ray Cyrus and Michael Bolton.

## NEW YORK GIANTS' SUPER BOWL RINGS

Last year, 17 Super Bowl rings belonging to New York Giants players were stolen by burglars who managed to cut holes in the roof of the building where the rings were stored. In January, the police finally tracked the rings down to a late deposit box in Saugus, Mass., made some wires, and returned the rings to their rightful owners. Which is good,

because in this economy, they'd need all the gold they can get.

## SOUTHWEST'S SEXIST IMAGE

The discount airline has apparently decided we all secretly long for the days when stewardesses were dressed in hot pants and go-go boots in a *Sex with Stars* fashion. Southwest's new uniform of khaki clad model Star Trek pants on one side of the plane, with a spokesman saying, "This definitely wouldn't be *Sex with Stars*." The airline's new look is a *Sex with Stars* look. The airline's new look is a *Sex with Stars* look. The airline's new look is a *Sex with Stars* look.

—James J. Winkler



## 'There's some truth to that, and no truth to it'

—Paula Abdul, commenting on the rumor that fellow *American Idol* judge Simon Cowell had asked her on a date

'I love that you have real breasts! Because in all the breast scenes, your breasts do what real breasts do. God bless your real breasts.'

—Oprah Winfrey, praising actress Kase Wisler



## 'WHEN SOMEONE PUTS UP NUMBERS LIKE THAT, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK: STEROIDS'

—Oscar host Hugh Jackman, on Meryl Streep getting her 15th nomination. She lost.



## 'AT THIS POINT I WOULD JUST LIKE HIM TO BE LAW-ABIDING'

—Actress Anne Hathaway, on what she's looking for in a man. Her last boyfriend, Raffaello Follieri, is serving four years in prison for fraud.



## 'IT JUST DIDN'T GO WITH THE DRESS'

—Jennifer Lopez, on why she didn't wear her wedding ring to the Golden Globe Awards

'I'm not going to lie; I feel like a huge chin has been lifted off of my shoulders'

—ABC late-night host Jimmy Kimmel, on the decision made by NBC's Jay Leno not to move to ABC



## LINGO:

1. Slang or jargon. 2. Language that is unfamiliar or strange, or may have been said by celebrities and their watchers captured in the spotlight. —James J. Wiseman

### I WANT TO GO TO THERE!

Originating on an episode of *30 Rock* near the end of 2008, by 2009 this line had over 70,000 Google hits, becoming the first genuinely popular catchphrase this century. Taking a common phrase and adding the word "to" is what comedy writers are good for.

off. And "far enough" sounds so much sadder than "pay off."

### JESSICA BLIMPSON

After Jessica Simpson surfaced in January with some corny poems on her own body, celebrity magazines plastered the pictures everywhere and people all over the Web started calling her "Jessica Simpson." Apparently it's never because it rhymes and compares her to a disfigurement, 90 per cent of those who use this term online are probably eating a potato bag of potato chips as they type it.



### FURLONGHS

A delightful euphemism introduced by the Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, to describe his program forcing government employees to take time off without pay. He says it will save the state of California a lot of money and prevent lay-

offs. And "far enough" sounds so much sadder than "pay off."

off. And "far enough" sounds so much sadder than "pay off."

### SUPERTRAINS

This term has been used on the part to describe laugh-again rail, but this year, bloggers started typing it with caps, on the assumption that all caps makes it seem

cool. So when bloggers learned that Obama had more SUPERTRAINS, they're not talking about bringing back the failed 1979 TV series. Though that train was pretty cool.

### GOING FULL BALE

After Christian Bale's spectacular run on the set of *Terminator Salvation*, which inspired a public apology and a dance remix on YouTube, it's no longer enough to say that someone got really mad. Going Full Bale means going beyond over-the-top into full-on disaster territory. Except that when you go Full Bale, you don't get paid millions of dollars for it.





## NIAGARA FALLS



# DEPARTURES

### LOKI ROURKE

Mickey Rourke's childhood dog, Lolo, died only weeks after the Golden Globes, when the world first learned of the actor's cancer affliction. Since then, Rourke has taken to wearing a necklace featuring Lolo's photo. During an interview with Barbara Walters, televised the night of the Academy Awards, Rourke praised his dogs for being "there when no one else was." As fate would have it, Lolo wasn't around to see Rourke not win the Oscar.

### WILLIAM PETERSEN

New years (re)opening the popular *Oz* television character on CBS, William Peteresen called it quits. Not because of money disputes or another job but "because I'm afraid of being too comfortable," he says. It's an admirable sentiment. But after years of collecting \$100,000 a episode, he's going to be comfortable for a long time yet.

### CHAH HON GOH

When Chah Hon Goh joined the National Ballet of Canada in 1988, Karen Kwan told him, "Everything you do is so right. Hang on to that." Goh, a principal ballerina since 1994, has over time, and now, she's retiring. After 20 years on her toes, who can blame her for wanting a break?

### J.O. FORTUNE

After winning the reality TV contest *Rock Star: INXS* in 2005, J.O. Fortune toured with the Australian '80s band as a tribute act. Barely two months on the road, the New Glasgow, N.S., native says he was ditched by INXS in Hong Kong. The band says the tour was over. Whatever happened, Fortune claims he's back home, again. (Before his win, he signed his act.) Hopefully Fortune's luck will turn it into a debut album in a show to be released.

### CAROLINE KENNEDY

"Caroline's Kipper." That's how the *New York Post* put it when Caroline Kennedy withdrew her bid for the U.S. Senate seat once held by Hillary Rodham Clinton. More surprising than her forfeit was Kennedy's final interest: the job and how never held office. She's also a hapless public speaker. But Kennedy doesn't need a life in politics to make a difference she's raised millions for N.Y.C. public schools.

### THE BECKHAMS

Barely two years ago, Victoria and David Beckham moved to Los Angeles from Madrid so he could join the L.A. Galaxy soccer team. However, now he spent two weeks of the off-season playing for Milan's club, he's stated their preference to be in Italy. They've been confirmed to Chicago, Kansas, and Toronto. Victoria and David on a left hand—their hair, Victoria, he's in Brazil. Call it sleep.

—Gailly Gailly

### NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls, Ont., faces disqualification from the New Seven Wonders competition unless it was the support of the U.S. and its role in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Only the Canadian side has a committee to promote the waterfall. The contest wants only Canada/Niagara's tourism director is misled. "Our recognition as a world wonder doesn't have to be validated by this contest," Ronny.

### STEVEN PAGE

The once-chubby, wacky, burlesque Ladies singer now a trim dancer with a coke hat behind him and an American girl beside him—and new career partners. He's traded Lady status for solo and classical projects. His complicated personality never really fits in with the band's "rockabilly" image. Page says. And all across the country, fans know: that's why we loved you.

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## TRAVEL AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

A Glossary of Key Terms for Bewildered Travellers

The world of travel is complex. Unfortunately, so is the lingo. The travel industry playbook is filled with acronyms. Injoke, even the odd exaggerated or completely misleading definition (see Direct Flight). At TakeOffEh.com we work to help it all make sense – so our editorial policy is to offer nice stop-level intelligence. Trust us, we're fully aware of the zany nature of the challenges.

The following glossary of key travel terms is here to help you become a better-informed travel shopper.

**Advertised Price:** The only attractive fare posted in large, bold type followed by an inevitable series of asterisks and fine print that makes it much less attractive.

**Lead-in Price:** The impossibly low price that refers to a single leg seat on a specific flight or a cruise cabin (booked deep within the bowels of a ship's stateroom). Typically the price people demand when they contact a travel agent. Good luck!

**Lowest Available Fare:** Usually refers to a single leg seat. Lowest Available Fare means the lowest price available at the exact moment. If you like it, buy it five minutes from now. Travel probably be gone.

**Plus Taxes:** Two little words listed under a fabulous advertised price. Example: "Hey, I just saw a flight to Orlando for \$99 plus taxes." "Awesome! How much is it with taxes?" "\$487." "Uh-huh, yeah, no thanks."

**Off-Peak:** Any period during which less travel occurs. February is a Whopping Off-Peak.

**Direct Flight:** A flight that stops at another airport enroute to your final destination. Passengers remain on the plane during the stop. (We told you this was misleading.)

**Non-Stop Flight:** A flight that actually goes from departure point to destination without stopping. It's like a direct flight, but without the stops.

**Carry-On:** Luggage you are allowed to carry onto the plane with you. Also known as "the bag with everything you can cram into it" or "the luggage they can't take."

**Airport Codes:** Three letter codes assigned to all airports. Toronto = YYZ. Montreal = YUL. Vancouver = YVR. (PS, if you find a tag on your bag that says "RVI" don't take it as an insult. It means you're headed to Fresno. Hope that's where you wanted to go.)

**Open Jaw:** Arrive legs for flying into one place and flying from another. Also known as. The sack on your face when you arrive at the \$99 "Advertised Price" actually amounts to, when taxes and surcharges are included.

**Bribe & Mosaic:** A quaint term referring to a traditional travel agency where local people who actually know about travel, won't put you on hold while they conveniently arrange your travel.

**Rock Rules:** The thoroughly inflated price listed on the back of a hotel room door "Who would pay this?" Someone might. If every other room in town were booked. – By Bruce Patterson

## We're The Wanderers

Introducing 2009's 'It' tourists

**CANADIANS ARE HOT!** Why? Because we're everywhere. Our zeal for travel has landed Canada a leading role on the global tourism stage. Just ask the people of Mexico, Cuba, France or the U.S., among others – Canadians are red carpet tourists. (And not just because we're nice.)

Over the years, Canadian resilience to terrorist threats, SARS epidemics and even the recent economic downturn has contrasted sharply with our neighbours to the south who are more inclined to hunker down in times of trouble. As an example, hoteliers in the Caribbean, hurting from the dearth of economically wounded Americans and Europeans, are vociferously counting on Canadian operators to fill rooms. As they do, they're also dropping rates, which means better deals for us!

25.3 million – According to the Canadian Tourism Commission, that's the number of trips Canadians made abroad as of November 2008 – an increase of 8.4% over

"Many people see travel as a right, something they do every year. They may cut their leisure or business budget, but they are still going to travel."



Illustration: Dean Kaplan for TakeOffEh.com

"The customer who used to spend \$1699 per person may have lost some dollars on the stock market, but they've figured out they can now get a similar vacation for \$899 – and believe me, they're going!"

2007. If you don't count children under 15 years of age, that's one trip per person. We topped our trips to the U.S. with an overall increase of 7.6% and an increase of 14% to Florida alone. Non-U.S. destinations witnessed an increase of 9.8%.

Another reason we love to travel? Writer Mary travel agents claim to be busier than ever as they field calls from tired Canucks looking to make an escape. According to John Kirk, Senior Vice President Retail for Thomas Cook North America: "The customer who used to spend \$1699 per person may have lost some dollars on the stock market, but they've figured out they can now get a similar vacation for \$899 – and believe me, they're going!"

According to Tony Pollard of The Hotel Association of Canada, Canadians are determined travellers. "Many people see travel as a right, something they do every year. They may cut their leisure or business budget, but they are still going to travel."

Yet another key factor contributing to the Canadian itch for travel is that many of us have immigrated here from elsewhere and we enjoy visiting our roots. The large immigrant population stimulates strong VFR (vacationing friends and relatives) making the Great White North a hot commodity for the world's airlines.

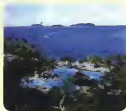
Call it luck, but here in Canada, the global economic slowdown has been less debilitating than in many other parts of the world, allowing us the freedom to travel. It's not surprising that tourism organizations the world over are taking notice of Canadians and our appetite for travel. Recently, U.S. tourism advertising dollars previously targeted at the U.K. and Japan have even been redirected to Canada. Apparently, research is finding that the "Come and Discover America" message yields a better ROI with Canadians. (In previous years, we were considered too arduous to travel in.) Let's hope all the attention doesn't go to our heads. As it stands, the fact that we're perceived as being "nice" (if a

little dull), serves us well in foreign countries. It looks like that little Canadian flag is starting to radiate real star power. – By Nina Slavick, co-founder of TakeOffEh.com

## Test Your Knowledge of Malaysia

Malaysia is sandwiched between which 2 Asian countries?

- a) Thailand and Singapore
- b) Singapore and Hong Kong
- c) India and Jamaica



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### How Hotels Get Graded

**Y**OUR HOTEL HAS A 5-STAR rating, but you would be hard pressed to give it 3. The pool was closed evenings, the check-in clerk was surly and the last guest's dirty socks were still in the dresser drawer.

Who assigned those stars, you wonder? The question is straightforward enough—the answer is a little murky. If Michelin gave a hotel 4 stars, you can expect a certain level of service, but the reality is, no one body oversees all hotel ratings. In fact, it isn't unusual for the same hotel to get 2 stars from one organization and 4 from another. Travel corporations, hotel associations, tourist boards and local governments all hand out stars. Some hotels even site themselves—all in the name of saving room and scoring tourist dollars.

What's more, each grading system looks for different things. Some are based on simple checklists of available amenities. Others involve anonymous inspectors who evaluate service. Still others, such as Canada's package tour operators, assign their own ratings to Southern sun destinations. The reason that 5 star hotel in Cuba didn't measure

up to its cousin in the Bahamas? According to Sue Cevelluca of Air Canada Vacations, it's because ratings are based on the best available facilities in each specific region.

Confused? You aren't alone. Until recently, aside from lodging a complaint with a manager, there was virtually nothing hotel guests could do about bad experiences. The Internet has changed all that. Now, thanks to travel blogs and consumer-driven websites like TripAdvisor, disgruntled travelers can speak up. The good news is hotel rating services are paying attention.

Susan Weinstein, editor of New Jersey-based Norfstar Travel Media, says that guests bawling about bad service on the Internet can lead to hotels being re-evaluated (Norfstar began delisting out stays in 1998 and licenses the data for use by the travel industry. Their rating service covers over 51,000 properties worldwide.) If Norfstar receives a complaint, company representatives investigate and offending hotels are demoted.

Brian Simpson, general manager of Travelocity.ca, agrees. He says that online

It isn't unusual for the same hotel to get 2 stars from one organization and 4 from another.

ritakes such as Travelocity often adjust North Star ratings up or down based on guest feedback. In his company's case, hotels are assigned a score of 1-5 (happy faces in addition to stars) to rate customer satisfaction.

Travelocity's navi. Expeda consults with a variety of existing travel sources to compile its own 1-to-5 star ratings. According to Chris Day, Expeda's director of marketing, these ratings are based on a property's average score—which, you guessed it, is often based on customer feedback.

The people behind Mobile Travel Guide have been in the ratings game for 51 years. "We will react to guest feedback," says Shane O'Flaherty, president of a hotel app that is dropped, entirely, not simply demoted, he says. Florida-based AAA, which also gives 1 to 5-diamond ratings to Canadian hotels for the GAA, investigates complaints, but pays more attention to those from its \$5 million auto club members than ones on the Internet, says Michel Mousseau, one of their regional

Yes, it's all a little confusing. The moral of the story, however, is that in today's Internet age, if your hotel doesn't live up to its rating, tell the world. Your prices can eclipse its stars.

— By Doug McArthur

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# THE BACK PAGES

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film

Atom and Ivan. Or is it Ivan and Atom? Either way, it's a summer rug. They could be a folk duo, a comedy act, or perhaps a tag team of prolific screenwriters. But Atom Egoyan and Ivan Reitman are prominent Canadian filmmakers, and they are now, incongruously, joined at the hip—making a movie together. They couldn't come from more far-flung corners of cinema. Reitman is Hollywood's erstwhile king of comedy, who produced the modern first boy-fuzz with *Backstreet* (his *Animal House*, *Stripes* and *Ghostbusters*). Egoyan is Canadian cinema's resident architect of angst, an Oscar-nominated auteur who has explored grief and sexual abuse in various riddles like *Eden*, *The Sweet Hereafter* and *Where the Truth Lies*. The notion of them working together would seem preposterous. But this

emotionally and philosophically complex as anything he's done, but presented in a manner that will stick in us viewers in a way that few other movies have not. That's the great hope."

Sole Reitman trying to ghostwrite Egoyan out of the set house? It certainly looks that way. After hiring Egoyan, he studied half a dozen of his movies, and had "long philosophical discussions" with him about how they could have been more accessible. "I watched them very analytically, just figuring out the DNA of his work," explains Reitman. He cited on *Reborn's* journey (1996), which "I think may be Atom's best movie in many ways," he says. "I pointed out where the storytelling was effective, and what he did that hurt in chances for being an audience-reachable movie." For a drama about sexual killers, he adds, it had an odd resonance to "help-

convincing her and the producers into an overall setting of Toronto. "There's a unique something in Toronto," he says, "a huge erotic subtexture. We're more exploratory than we give ourselves credit for. Ivan told me what he loved about East 12 in the way it depicted Toronto. It's a city I understand."

Before the shoot, Reitman and Egoyan spent a week together in Toronto, discussing its style and scoring locations. Their camp was Reitman's lovely penthouse suite atop the Four Seasons. "There was a lot of room service," says Egoyan, who riffs about the suite like a kid who's had his first airplane ride. "You can see the lake directly. I loved hanging out there, because it's a Toronto I don't know. Something about the city was being revealed to me just by virtue of this incredible nest he had in a place I'd never

## ODD COUPLE

When *Ghostbuster* Ivan Reitman wants to remake a sexy French movie, who's he gonna call—auteur Atom Egoyan! BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

earth they are in Toronto shooting *Chloe*—an erotic intrigue about a woman (Julianne Moore) who has a hooker (Amélie Seyfried) to save the fidelity of her husband (Liam Neeson).

Reitman is producing the film, a remake of a French movie called *Notre* that caught his eye at the 2003 Toronto International Film Festival. And he has hired Egoyan to direct it, to nobody in it means. "Ivan has very strong opinions about what makes something popular," says Egoyan before shooting a scene of rose dialogue between Moore and Seyfried in a Quoniam Street call. "I've never given a second thought about what makes something popular. For Ivan, my barrier that's crossed between the viewer and the movie is troubling, and in my work, that's the same I have to operate in."

Then how can they possibly co-exist? "The question you're asking is a fair one," Reitman responds in a separate interview. He insists he's a fan of Egoyan's work, and just wants to make it more audience-friendly. "I'm hoping that this story is as

going up the easiness for an audience."

The notion of whipping up accessibility sounds very on Egoyan. But the director, who's always up for analyzing his own oeuvre, rebuffed the debate. "Ivan can't help Moore and I have that. We're both really enjoying the process. We're both rediscovering some aspect of how we create ourselves."

Egoyan calls *Chloe* "a different heart" from any of his previous 11 features. *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Eden* (2002) were his most successful. *Chloe* is the first he hasn't written himself, and the first with a linear chronology. "It doesn't read the way I'd approach it on my own terms," he says. "It can be a bit flat, a bit dogmatic, and more concentrated on performance." *Chloe* is Egoyan's first movie with no role for himself, across *Amour* (2004). And his first with no Canadian funding. Entirely financed by French distributor Studio Canal—and produced by Reitman's California-based Monsoon Pictures Co., which isn't even Reitman (Juni) as executive producer—*Chloe* may also be the first non-Canadian movie in which Toronto explicitly plays itself.

Wilson had originally on the script in her hometown of San Francisco. But Egoyan

been to. There was something exciting and something about that."

Egoyan, meanwhile, drove Reitman around the city, suggesting locations for *Chloe*. "It was weird that I was driving Ivan around in my Prius," he says. "He knows the city well, well enough to know how to use the place to have something like an idea, and that the thing of things are the best thing there." Atom, meanwhile, introduced him to his favorite calls. He also pointed out *Notre*, Toronto's infamous swinger's club—which happens to be right next door to Carleton Hall, a film/cinema co-owned by Egoyan. "We didn't go to," he says, disingenuous. "The idea of us going in there with towels around our waists was a bit much."

At one point, after scouting a location at the University of Toronto, where he teaches part-time, Egoyan felt compelled to show Reitman his office, even though there's nothing remarkable about it. He parked in his secret spot by the gate, and when they came back, the Prius was blocked by a truck. "It was very cold," Egoyan recalls. "Ivan was standing there. I took him to the little cafeteria/University College and went back out.

I was absolutely trapped, and it became a little nightmare. When I came back, he'd finished his coffee and was looking at his watch. It was one of these better moments where you feel you're being punished for making a mistake, and then that wasn't completely warranted—showing him these glimpses into my life."

Reitman, 62, and Egoyan, 48, are far from frozen perceptions, and different voices. But both are assassins—Jean was born in Egypt, but in the former Caribbean colonies. Reitman cut his teeth as a Canadian producer, working with David Cronenberg on *Shivers* and *Barbed* in the early '70s. Then, descending to Hollywood, he made movie stars of Saturday Night Live's John Belushi, Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd with a mix of broad comedy and sweet sentiment. As a director, Reitman scored his biggest hits as a single dose of fun, from 1981 to 1994, mostly Cheesecake-and-spaghetti comedy. Lately there's been a lot of interest chatter about a *Gladiator* II, which the producer says is by no means imminent.

Reitman has never won a film award, aside from an honorary Oscar and two Golden Ravi Awards for box-office performance. But Egoyan's career—nurtured in the kitchenette of publicly funded Canadian cinema—has been filled by awards, more than 30 of them. "My whole philosophy," he says, "has been to make films for as little a budget as possible to give me the autonomy to make the film I want." His most costly film, *Where the Truth Lies* (2005), turned out to be his biggest flop, commercially and critically, which prompted his return to the small canvas of *Adoration*, due out in May.

But despite his return to Hollywood, Egoyan respects Reitman as part of a Canadian pantheon. "You think about the Oscars as you think about the Normans and the Vikings," he says, alluding to *Jarvis* and *Crashdancing*. "We don't have a lot of father figures. I've studied his career, and he was incredibly wise." Egoyan was also once a student of Reitman's language-producing partner, former U of T professor Joe Medjuck, who was an art-film guru before leaving academia to join Jean in Hollywood.

Egoyan recalls first meeting Reitman at the Gonitsky 1985, when he was introduced

for Sean of Pan and Sean was picking up his birthday cake. "I remember saying him, 'I was all of it at the time. He said, 'Se-what's your movie about?' Egoyan told him it was the story of a boy who kills a family and responds in their sibling's way. 'And that's not so disastrous to Dave,' he says, citing Reitman's 1991 movie *Starting Over* like as a presidential spokesperson who falls in love with the first lady. "That's right up my alley, in terms of surrogate."

It's easy to see why Reitman imagined Egoyan directing *Chloe* after seeing the French original, which stars Gérard Depardieu

AMANDA SEYFRIED, who co-stars in *Chloe* along with Julianne Moore



**How can they see eye to eye? 'The question you're asking is a fair one,' Reitman concedes.**

den, Fanny Ardant and Emmanuel Béart. With no layers of creative interference, *Chloe* is highly reminiscent of *Enigma*. But *Chloe* is "a far more critically charged version of the story," says Egoyan. To research the movie, the director interned prostitutes on hotel bars in Manhattan. (He says he would have been too easily recognized in Toronto.) "I wanted to know details. I'd say, 'It's a writer doing research,' but I'm sure they've heard that line a lot. If you're paying \$100 for information, they were sure that if you paid an extra few hundred you'd find out exactly what they do. They

are you as a job?" Both forays into the decadence are far removed from Reitman's more work, which suggest *Groundhog Day* or *My Neighbor Totoro* to executive producing. Their *Park Boy: The Movie*, "It's a look at a man's marriage, and what happens to sexuality in marriage," says Reitman. And in loving Egoyan, "I thought the combination of our personalities would make it a good movie."

Egoyan, meanwhile, says that after *Where the Truth Lies*—a film that had way too many twists and turns—*Chloe* was a relief to straighten up. And so will the characters. In

outgoing Egoyan's earlier movies, Reitman liked the lead actors, "but with more roles," says the director. "He thinks I tend to cast more grotesque characters, as opposed to people who would just be those roles. I take a lot of pleasure in putting these pairs in the kind of movies I don't want to do them." To observe Egoyan and Reitman together on set, their conversations quickly fall away. *Adoration* is at least as comic and playful as *Enigma*. As they pose for *Adoration*'s photo, he jokes that he's trying to recreate the poster for *Jesus*. "So which one is Danny DeVito?" cracks Medjuck.

Egoyan says the previous night he took Reitman to dinner at Joe's restaurant, whose co-owner once

belonged to the famed *Vol* folk duo Malka and Jossie Reisman, as it turns out, once compared against them in high school as part of a Jewish Studies folk group. "We got laughed out of me out of the folk business for ever," Himmis. Egoyan started out as a journalist and classical guitar. If an arrangement of conversation ever resulted in a film, it doesn't pan out, he says. And *Adoration* at work was folkier after all. Judging that, they could always take a shot at *Gladiator* II. ■

**ON THE WEB:** For a video of the *Adoration* photo shoot go to [www.medjuck.ca/chloe](http://www.medjuck.ca/chloe)



#### WE'RE STALKING CHRIS BROWN

Is this artist a salubrious subject for children? On the same day he was in court he filed charges of battery on his girlfriend, fellow singer Rihanna. Chris Brown was working on his *MyEclipse* page, thanking fans for supporting him and asking them to vote for him in the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards. Although the R & B artist potentially faces four years in jail for the beating, Brown then went out to an L.A. hotel to bounce it up with his bodyguards.

# EXTRAORDINARY CANADIANS



**Three special events featuring Adrienne Clarkson, Margaret MacMillan, Nino Ricci, and M.G. Vassanji**

**in conversation with General Editor John Ralston Saul**

#### TORONTO

**Wednesday, March 25  
at 7:00 P.M.**

World Library of Canada  
Korea Reading Series

The Park Hyatt Toronto  
4 Avenue Road

For tickets call 416-977-0008  
or visit [www.worldlib.ca/korea](http://www.worldlib.ca/korea)

Tickets also available at  
Unif! Bookstore

#### MONTREAL

**Sunday, April 26  
at 4:00 P.M.**

11th Blue Metropolis Montreal  
International Literary Festival

Delta Centre-Ville Hotel, 777 University St.

For tickets call 514-790-1245  
or 1-800-361-4595

Tickets on sale from March 31

For more info visit [www.bluemetropolis.org](http://www.bluemetropolis.org)  
A CBC Blue event hosted by Paul Kennedy

#### OTTAWA

**Monday, April 27  
at 6:30 P.M.**

Ottawa International  
Writers Festival

Saint-Basile's Centre for the  
Arts and Humanities  
314 Saint Patrick Street

For tickets call 613-562-1243

For more info visit  
[www.writersfestival.org](http://www.writersfestival.org)

**Why They Mattered Then.  
Why They Matter Now.**





**CULINARY CONFLUENCE** An elaborate meal at the Whangpoo Club, for dessert, perhaps a bubble cream to dine with avocado puree?

## Where not to eat in Shanghai

**A peculiar culinary free-for-all seems to have taken hold of the city's priciest restaurants**

**BY JACOB NICHOLS** • Picture this: to one side of a rectangular plate you find a sautéed scallop whose plate you find a sautéed scallop of raw grass, perched like a table top on legs of melted cheese standing upright, and sprinkled over top with ginger julienned as this is served. At the other end of the plate there sits a small oval composed of baby greens tossed with a Japanese-inspired apple-based vinaigrette. Boon-colored ravioli and blanched chopped celery are scattered here and there, along with a generous drizzle of a citrus-based reduction. And all of this has been put together for you at considerable expense in Shanghai, China, at the Whangpoo Club, one of the conspicuously pricey Three on the Bund.

Staring up the confusing dish after a first bite I am reminded strongly of a time and place far away: Toronto, circa 1982, when fusion was the rage and everyone was into fusion. Asian fusion, even as interpreted by local white chefs who had never traveled any closer to the South China Sea than San Francisco Avenue—like Greg Gouldland for example. But this time the culinary kaleidoscope was poured the other way.

Shanghai is a new city, and increasingly the most Westernized and internationalized city on the continent in China. It is also the proud urban symbol of its economic success. And with the rest of the world now interested in a taste, and apparently at risk from abroad, having pulled nearby into town to do business (say, David Lane from Australia, and before that, Jean-Guyon Vongerichten from New York), a peculiar culinary free-for-all appears to have taken hold of the city's most expensive restaurants.

For example, at the popular fashion restaurant T1, chef created rice oil with Wangy-

chen-inspired raw grass leaf—measured with chocolate—and then followed with a balsamic lamb “high pie” that turned out to be a lamb pot pie spiced with enough Sichuan pepper to numb every palate in the restaurant. At the highly recommended Jade on M6, on the 16th floor of the Shengfa (a Hotel in Pudong, my meal began with an asparagus designed to enhance the appetite with the simulated consumption of a cigarette—a tender candied roll of raw grass cream served in an oyster, with like six as a dip—then I just didn’t think I could fit here. Chef then followed with a duck breast heavily “buddhistized”—three golden-brown seared globes of the stuff, stuck to the plate with mayonnaise—and then a “caramel” of cod, whose cross-section was adorned with various sauce and melted cheese. For dessert a Nutella ice cream like an a bud of... avocado puree.

The dinner ended five gins at the Whangpoo, meanwhile, was the aspiration of chef Jeremy Lange, author of *New Shanghai Cuisine*. And today for him there is nothing odd about Shanghai as five gins, or the model would be upping out instead of pointing a dish that combined a sautéed scallop of raw grass served cold, topped with a chocolate-berry berry sauce, something that had been dredged in, and paired with dorying synap-

sauked jolifish (Chinese dates) and/or with plum sauce and dough.

Despite such innovations, the Chinese seem to like fish stock. Its taste, fatness and gelatinous texture stick each other with them that they are mixing their own (volume of not quality of Chinese production clearly taste that of Quebec). I also sampled Taiwanese caviar, and even some rather expensive “Buddhist style” Chinese wine (then for they do a far better job of popping wine in DVDs and designer purses). All the expensive Western-inspired food was intensely disappointing.

But as in so much of Asia, the street food of Shanghai is delight. Their particular style of cooking tends to be somewhat as well as an affection for poetry—very possibly a legacy of the European colonialists. The Shanghai scene is responsible for at least three of my preferred low and Chinese street foods: potato-sauces potatoes (Chinese lettuce, as I think of the 1st, potatoes, and soup-filled dumplings). To be, Chinese street food has been elevated to the art of the street food of Singapore (jacking, here, though, they sprinkle their street food with sauce and have their street food in golden and crisp as a good example). Smiling through a wet market in the morning you can enjoy all these snacks and more, all washed down with a cup of spicy black crushed with toothpaste and a thick slice of a black, and be out of pocket for less than a dollar. And that is very much worth wandering for. ■

### TODAY'S SPECIAL... PEPTO-BISMOL ICE CREAM

Discovered by the manufacturers of the probiotic-infused medicine, a recipe for Pepto-Bismol as a base for ice cream is circulating on the internet. The author says that combining the pink in their with a vanilla ice cream makes the best ice cream it is an ice cream recipe you're a surprisingly rich and only dessert that also comes the fun factor. Pepto's makers warn that the medicine should only be taken as directed.



**BE PACE** It's not always golden: LeClaire had to remind her stressed friends and family that "not all silence is punishing and disappointing."

## A mother decides to try out silence

**Anne LeClaire describes what happened when she quit speaking two days a month**

**BY JULIA MCNEIL** • Seventeen years ago, the American novelist Anne LeClaire gave up talking to people for two days each month. LeClaire is married to a historian and they have a son and a daughter. At home, the ignored father calls and won't talk to her husband. When she's out, she shows people a card that says "I Am Having a Day of Silence." Now, in a new book, *Learning to Be a Mother*, a Meditation on the Practice of Silence, LeClaire reveals the hurdles and rewards of her "silence exercise."

She was an unlikely candidate for an act of silence. "The concept was alien to my personality. In high school, I was once given these desecrated single study hall because I found it impossible to sit through 40 minutes without talking to the girl next to me." The idea to stop talking struck her while she was walking on a beach. A neighbor's voice told her, "It is silence," and, oddly, the voice didn't frighten her, she says. "For some reason, I felt not conscious to speak or question my identity." And "I didn't think I was being sent messages from heaven."

The next day she stopped talking for the first time in her life. She was a writer in home alone, writing novels and raising a small business on the side with her normally supportive husband, Hilary, who reminded her plan at first, calling it "fascinating noise" and "fascinating when I need to take you something and you can't answer."

LeClaire likes the first day, she noticed, "My writing flowed effortlessly. At I thought about this, I wondered if the energy that was normally disrupted in speech was going instead into the work." She remembered Proust's observation, "Without great solitude no serious work is possible." The same day, she

overheard her husband answer the phone and tell her friend Lucy, "No, she's not here right now. I'm not sure when she'll be back." She thought, "What a commentary on our civilization, when being alone is considered suspect, when one has to apologize for it, make excuses. Just the fact that one practices it—like a secret war."

On another occasion, LeClaire's friend Hilary arrived to help with housework. LeClaire presented her "silence" card and returned to her office and shut the door. But "soon my concentration was broken. Post prandial, my blood sugar dropped. I tried to continue beyond that whatever was going on had nothing to do with me. She probably had an argument with her boyfriend." But as LeClaire was leaving, she told LeClaire her silence made her angry. "My mother used silence as a weapon," LeClaire said. "Her silence was so powerful it could stop her kids' hands."

LeClaire sympathized. Her parents had done the same. "Their anger was disguised in this benign, old-old positive voice, and that forced me to let her put me down when you'd done wrong." And the lesson in "speaking mode," LeClaire writes, "I would have said this to Proust: not all silence is punishing. Not all silence is disappointing." Later in the book, she explains, "Silence holds two faces. To be silenced is not at all the same as

choosing not to speak. To be silenced is crippling, bordering on corrupting. Choice and focus are healing, expensive, instructive."

Then there was the day her husband voiced a petty complaint while they were driving. "Has he deliberately brought up the report because I can't respond? My heart claps then. And he keeps talking. Don't think that is the end of it, I think, just said until tomorrow. You can't let me be alone. This is the most interesting the last day and cannot remember the words he used that upset her. "And I wonder that. What if it hadn't been a full day? Your perceptions. Automatic responses. Spontaneous emotions. How many times do we jump into an argument when we're tired? In an hour, our words would be tempered?"

The practice also helped correct her tendency to be critical of others. Once, at an art museum, she learned as the others introduced themselves, "I slipped into a cruel mood. One was beautiful. Another enthusiastic. Still another boring. And a fourth disappointed the conversation. I was not speaking but my mind was busy—reporting, disapproving. Once again, I was so busy and grumpy. I was unable to hear. I was separated from my fellow artists not only by my silence but by my own insecurities, which had exaggerated a need to be superior, as very often the place out of which judgment is born."

A final quote asked her, "What do you gain by observing silence?"

"It makes me serious," LeClaire said. ■

### MOST IMPROVED... ANY WINEHOUSE

The A-list singer is staying off booze and drugs now, and that means looking for things to fill her time productively and mood-temptation. One new interest is learning how to drive. A friend says, "She wants a car so she can drive around. It gives her her friends and family. She will have to avoid drink and drugs in order to get behind the wheel." What could possibly go wrong?





THEY WERE over three dozen passengers on the Greyhound bus when Vincent Li stabbed and beheaded Tim McLean in July 2004

## The silence of the Canadian lambs

Maybe we have trouble telling our own stories because so many we try to tell are false



MARK STEYN

beauties who have concrete space for Canadian to tell their own stories.

Personally, whenever I hear that line, the only place out I'm in the mood for is "And then I woke up, and it had all been a bad dream." But, assuming you're of a more intelligent bent, the question then arises: why do Canadians have such difficulty telling their own stories?

Well, perhaps another maybe because most of the ones we're trying to tell are false.

I don't use that word lightly. But I'm still digging myself out from the blizzard of misnomer to what I wrote in this space two weeks ago about *Polysyllables*, the film of the Montreal massacre. You can get a taste of my representative sampling of reader comments from the *Maclean's* website, but let's start with the *National Post's* selections:

"Mark Steyn uses the occasion of Denis Villeneuve's new film," wrote the *Post's* Chris Selley, "to review his complaints about Canadian amnesia, as represented by the male students who 'abandoned their female classmate's corpse' on their way home from McGill 10 years ago; we considered this line of argument usually contrived, now it's just told. The point, such as it is, has been made."

Oh, dear. I'm sorry it's "told." Actually, the point, such as it is, was that one Mr. Villeneuve, no right-wing pro-American yahoos but an impeccably Québécois progressive trying to

sell one of those quintessentially Canadian (okay, Québec) stories, had been unable to avoid placing the event's final paragraph in the heart of the film. Unfortunately, the official narrative of the event—the feminist narrative, the dark-underbelly-of-Canada tale you know—had been written every semester-hour narrative—essays in place, even though it's later revised. And, as long as Canada's establishment faces facing a fraud on me, I'm going to object.

By the way, since Mr. Selley tries so valiantly to wonder whether he was wary of other "conspicuous about Canadian amnesia." I mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Chén D'Amico, MP, told the Ontario Parliament that one in every two women in the province is abused or assaulted—including, as she noted, both the female members listening to her. The only difference between your *National Post's* mischievous and your Ontario amnesia is that the latter's more fervent about it. We can look at the Corps, we can look at *Unifor*, we can look at the horrors of the world, here, the most powerful warfare, here it's our men against our women, in the quiet of their own homes. "Does Chris Selley ever occasionally find this line of things also that were but told, after so much as an argument?"

Here's another Canadian story. The day Mr. Selley wrote his insightful piece, the Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba passed sentence on Vincent Li for robbing, beheading and partially castrating Tim McLean, his fellow passenger on Greyhound bus 1170. The "aggravated assault" between the Crown and the defense was full of interesting anecdotes. The *Winnipeg Sun's* Tom Brodeur published the full version.

"When Greyhound bus 1170 was approximately 28 kilometers west of Portage la Proux on the TransCanada Highway, Mr. Li began to repeatedly talk with Tim McLean, for no apparent reason."

"Tim McLean struggled to escape, as evidenced by a number of defensive wounds. He was unsuccessful and eventually either fell or was thrown to the floor of the bus. Due to his location at the back of the bus and adjacent to a window, the seat ahead of him was a barrier to escape."

"Mr. Li was once again in physical contact with Tim McLean, and continued to stab him as he lay on the floor. He did not pay any attention to the other passengers as the bus was vacated. He appeared oblivious to the demands of his driver Bruce Martin that he stop what he was doing. Several persons indicate that after everyone had reached the bus, Mr. Li came to the front of the bus and tried to exit. The bus driver was able to close the door on Mr. Li's arm, with the bloody knife outside the side of the bus."

"Mr. Li was able to pull his arm back into the bus, and returned to the rear of the bus, where he defiled the body of Tim McLean."

There were over three dozen passengers on the bus, including in the seats around Li and McLean. The attacker "did not pay any attention to the other passengers" and at one point was stabbing his victims "in the leg on the floor." That's difficult to do. We have no less on yet there is no suggestion here—"aggravated assault" that anyone attempted to disarm the "abductor" Mr. Li, would if, in Tim McLean's last conscious moments, he was aware that his fellow passengers had "rescued" the bus and barricaded him in with his under-

And then, at least, the Manitobans show up in all the superhuman combat gear, in some weird parody of the extreme the former strategy that kept me up the body



SHERIFF OFFICERS escort Li to a court appearance in 2004. He has been declared not criminally responsible for his actions

over it so many ways, at outside the bus for 40 hours even though Mr. Li was already seeing Mr. McLean's head around, and it was clear that we saw alive in the bus except the killer. Nevertheless, the RCMP passed the rest of the night watching Mr. Li after up the body, and the bits that took his body, while Sgt. Brown, Cpl. Smith and the rest of the best of the RCMP progress reports on the evening's disaster theatre: "Okay, [Sgt.] at the back of the bus, looking off gloves and eating it."

"Sgt." was the supercode to secret code name they decided to give the killer. When this another police communications turned upon YouTube, the RCMP issued a statement that it was "not meant for public consumption," which is the most telling explanation under the circumstances: "There have been no uniform had no police seats," wrote the *Winnipeg Sun's* Barry, "and did absolutely nothing to bring it to an end except sit on their hands and play computer." And Mr. Li was not good in the early hours of the morning and decided to leave the bus, they'd have to see the rest of the work.

Mr. Li's parents are now using the RCMP. All the RCMP regulations and all the Canadian Canada finding in the world can't make that into a story Canadians want to tell themselves. But experts are obliged to attempt it, and when they do, position help nothing a curious conspiracy—no the day's silence, all the questions that go unasked in the courts for financial consequences and more money under protection. In some future, undoubtedly yet, they understood the hole at the heart of the narrative. Silence, lambs, and Pharaoh's Ladder. Another loss and down of bystanders. Another Canadian story with no hero. No villain, either. Mr. Li has been declared not responsible for his actions, and that's the dirty little truth everyone else wants to get out. The Grayhound driver is said to have gone to school. The passengers are using the bus company

for the mental trauma they've suffered from having to stand around on the highway watching his Li devastate their fellow passenger. The politicians are ignoring for any level security at rural bus on busy highways in the middle of nowhere. And the experts are insisting on that "Shocked Murderer As Much A Victim As Behaved Passenger—Psychiatrist" (the *Daily Observer of New Brunswick*) I wouldn't say myself at least, he's higher up the food chain.

The question is whether these unequal Canadian stories are telling us something about typical Canadians—about what happens in the vacuum of abandoned social norms. Do you know the name Louis Liberson? You should. He was a 76-year-old Holocaust survivor who was teaching a class at Virginia Tech one Monday morning in 2007 when gunmen were loose. He reacted immediately. He threw himself against the door and told his students to climb out the windows. He saved his body as a death as long as he could, and was shot dead when the killer finally broke through.

Professor Liberson had lived under fascism and Communism, and perhaps was not so removed from the general impulses as so many Westerners seem to be. But what about Les Gordon Brown, shot when the last year's normie died at a Montreal University in Heloise with his head in his hands? At the killer's last pause, the wounded professor Gordon Brown grabbed his hand. A student pushed in. Two other men charged into the room, and as the professor collapsed of his wounds, helped hold down the crazy guy until the cops arrived. This story is the precise inversion of the *Ecce Polychrestus* instead of being the victim, the man who is it, and saved their fate.

The "Canadian story" Canadians have told themselves for 40 years is a self-aggrandizing narrative of pacifism and social solidarity. There's a lot of the former, not so much of the latter. ■

### MACLEAN'S BESTSELLERS

COMPILED BY BRIAN BELTANE

NUMBER 1 IN CIRCULATION FOR WEEK ENDING 12 DECEMBER 2014

#### Fiction

- 1 **THE GARDENERS LIBRARY** AND **PODCAST: THE SOCIETY** by Mary Ann Shaffer and Anne Groesbeck 1,900
- 2 **THE SHERIFFS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIE** by John Grisham 1,400
- 3 **HANDS WITH CARE** by Job P. Cook 1,100
- 4 **THE GUN WITH THE DEACON TAIL** by David Lister 1,000
- 5 **THE KINSHIP ONES** by Jonathan Lethbridge 900
- 6 **OLD CITY HALL** by Michael Ondaatje 800
- 7 **THE ASSOCIATE** by John Grisham 700
- 8 **POOL** by Christopher Moore 600
- 9 **THE WOMEN BY THE LAKE** by Michael Ondaatje 500
- 10 **THROUGH BLACK SPRUCE** by Judith Fryer 400

#### Non-fiction

- 1 **CULTURES BY Malcolm Gladwell** 2,100
- 2 **THE ART OF MONEY** by Matt Ferguson 1,000
- 3 **THE THANKS YEARS** by Joe Turner and Tim Marshall 800
- 4 **THE INHERITANCE** by Dan Snierson 700
- 5 **THE GREAT DEPRESSION AHEAD** by Henry J. Grant 600
- 6 **THE RETURN OF OBSESSION** by Philip K. Dick 500
- 7 **ECONOMICS IS EVIDENT ABOUT** by Adam Smith 400
- 8 **APRILS MAKE USHURAN** by Terence O'Connell 300
- 9 **ANGELS AND ARMS** by Adam Smith 200
- 10 **WHY EVOLUTION IS TRUE** by Jerry Coyne 100

LAST WEEK'S BESTSELLERS



THE HYPERCUBIC LINE" pops up on the new jazz album by Nalini, a physicist at the University of Guelph. All thanks to a fax of her music.

## Writing songs in the key of $e=mc^2$

**Diane Nalini, like Queen's Brian May, is a musician with an odd second career: physics**

**BY JOHN VENTURI**—Diane Nalini's worlds are about to collide. The 34-year-old, an applied physicist at the University of Guelph and professional jazz singer, is set to release *Like the Lake That, her fourth album, featuring 11 songs about the stars and the moon. While the concept sounds like a gimmick, especially coming from an astrophysicist, it's only fair to note that Nalini's previous releases have been well received. A review in the Montreal Gazette from a few years ago noted that Nalini has "a beguiling voice with beautiful intonation." Another, in the Globe and Mail, praised her "bell-clear tone, meticulous construction, lyrical dexterity and subtle swing." Given full Clinton is a fan. While Nalini was in school in 2001, Nalini met the now-deceased former president after performing a 40-minute set in a black-tie event fundraiser to be attended. A year or two later, at a Kander Schofer's reunion, Nalini approached Clinton to re-introduce herself, but was cut off before she could get her name out. "Oh my God, I remember you, Diane," Nalini recalls Clinton saying. "I have your album on my MP3 player."*

That kind of endorsement might have prompted some musician to drop everything in the pursuit of fame. But Nalini, while honored, refused to pick one side of her brain over the other. And this musical-physicist combo isn't unheard of. Some argue that's because physics, like music, focuses on patterns, sounds and notes. Others cite the work of Pythagoras, who found there are mathematically relationships between harmonious notes. In any case, Nalini is not alone. This summer unveils another collection of additional physicists, some by Harvard particle physicist Lisa Randall, will debut on a



### U3... HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

You don't know how beautiful you are / You don't know / You're someone's still they're looking up at / But we're into growing up / *Mothers of the Future / Make the day beautiful / I got a submarine / You and me / I don't want to live about / I want between nations / Not right now / Anybody / Don't say your death / Not right now / Anybody / Get it / Your death from U3's new CD. He lives on the horizon.*

guitar) this spring on Eastglow Records, the label she launched after moving back to Canada in 2007. All the songs, including the cover—the best-known one, King's X's "Vagaries" and James Taylor's "Sweet Baby James"—have a lyrical connection to science or the world we live in.

During the school year, Nalini, who studies under her full name, Diane Nalini de Korch, has, then to launch her own gigs a month. She plays jazz clubs and festivals—no loud ones. "I'm not interested in being background music," she says. "It's an inherent aesthetic, and it's inherent to the shift to 100% society's willingness to accept poor quality sound, the says, in exchange for convenience." So does Nalini think music differently from those of us with classical training? "Maybe, I put my technical hat on," she says, "but it can mean my own experience pretty far."

Though she doesn't think her understanding of science gives her an extra edge as a singer, Nalini says it doesn't hurt when putting the finishing touches on a track in the studio. "There are a bunch of frequencies—some are overlapping and some are singing on certain places—and it's about making sure that all the frequencies are balanced," she says. She also enjoys the subjectivity in music making. "I like the idea," she says, "of there not just one right answer." A rise Nalini has her day job, which currently involves building two heart lines from an astrophysics folder for a follow-up album, perhaps. ■

## Forget everything bad I said about robots



SCOTT FESCHUK

It's been a while since I read the personal threat posed by robots. In fact, it's been so long that some readers have emailed to accuse me of having been bought off and altered by the emerging robo industrial complex. Let me assure you: nothing, with the exception of a Conservative TV commercial depicting Stephen Harper as an empathic, could be further from the truth.

But my thinking has definitely evolved. A year ago, I described the many barriers of the forthcoming robotic age and how—thanks to advances in robotics—all humanity is destined to lead lives that are much more luxurious and, come the flesh-and-blood days of the robot revolution, much more over.

I may not be right that armed robots would ultimately be up against their creators, using their advanced programming and gadgetry to purge the earth of the vile human race. But hey, was I wrong? Robots are great. And the best part is that because I'm currently being asked again and again by my Boom! Bo! Boom! about the survival of our species, we are arranged by a story now reported in *Scientific American* by military robots, which was written for U.S. military purposes. The document contains a list of 10 ways in which we are being primarily by machines.

The worst thing that could happen to you as a human during such a conflict? Your headier anger got defused. And even then you'd stand a good chance of being awarded the Vietnam Cross for valor in the face of superior forces.

"Imagine the face of war with a score of our robotics," the report begins, almost gleefully. "Instead of our soldiers returning home in their draped caskets to heartbreaking families, our autonomous robots can replace the human soldier in an increasing range of dangerous missions." The war, it's true, is of California university research, but the case

that we are moving ever closer to the glorified day when robots will develop a sense of identity and be able to think and reason for themselves, just like 50 per cent of the James Bonders. "These robots would be 'human' enough to make decisions that only humans now can." (It's not encouraging new research suggests some theorists are already capable of deluding the latest on the issue.)

What really was me over in this report is its down on humanity one. I'd never fully grasped that we are the flesh-and-blood problem in which unstoppable robotic killing machines

of watching the 1980s sitcom *Star Trek: The Next Generation*... actually, that sounds like a pretty fair comparison.

Widespread, the report makes only one mention of the "same" autonomous robotic creation in South Africa that shot 25 "innocent" soldiers (apparently, those who survived were noticeably less "innocent") to the human-always, or the epidemic crashing of domestic aircraft around the world, or the incident from last April in which several U.S. units of long-deployed *Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*—mobile robots armed with machine guns—abruptly crashed their guns on American soldiers. Sure, these dramatic accusations may well be harbingers of the genre and final consequences that will be ultimately be enacted by our robots—but then again, there's no reason to think they're not. So let's just go with that.

What's important is that any strategy being felt by human military personnel in trying to be deployed. I mean, some of these U.S. soldiers act as though they've never been summoned to fight a well-armed insurgency while simultaneously being their own lethally unleashed robotic death tools. Come on! It was all covered in the army's basic training manual, under the section entitled "How Do All These Robots Get In My Zone?"



## I never grasped that we are the flesh-based problem to which they are the solution

are the gleaming solution. The researchers seem to be glancing at noting that "robots have a distinct advantage over the limited and fallible cognitive capabilities that we humans possess." For instance, if robots are used in an endless array of missions, they can be programmed to replace humans in providing rapid medical intervention on the battlefield. A spokesman for the U.S. "It could relieve immediate life-threatening injuries, or stop bleeding 'temporarily.' Sometimes it might even do these things in a soldier it didn't first appear by naming him over.

So there you have it: robots with guns, smart, a good idea. You've got the U.S. military's word on it. And when have they ever been wrong about anything? ■

ON THE WEB: To read Feschuk on the future, visit his blog, [maddams.ca/feschuk](http://maddams.ca/feschuk)





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